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# The Role of the Emotions in the Moral Life According to Immanuel Kant

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# The Role of the Emotions in the Moral Life According to Immanuel Kant

## **Abstract**

Against common misconceptions of Kant as a philosopher who neglects the emotional aspects of moral life, I show that he actually considers our emotional dispositions to be valuable tools for perfecting ourselves morally.

I show not only that it is incumbent on us to cultivate morally beneficial emotions, but also how we can do it. Building on Kant's vague hints about what the process involves, I argue that cultivating a given feeling requires, above all, sharpening one's judgment about it, one's sensitivity to its nature and to the shape it takes in one's own character in order to make responsible decisions about whether to act on the feeling and when one does choose to act on it, to express it in a way which harmonizes with one's sense of moral integrity.

I begin with an argument showing that on Kant's mature moral theory, it is our duty to cultivate feelings which help us form a virtuous disposition. I then discuss particular feelings which are especially important in this regard. I begin with the feeling of respect for the moral law and show that it constitutes the motive of duty. Kant's "pure" moral motive--the motive of duty--is thus actually a feeling which is grounded in a rational grasp of the moral law. I then consider feelings associated with our duties toward ourselves (e.g., pride and courage) and with our duties toward others (e.g., love and respect) and raise the question of how cultivated feelings figure in the virtuous character and also in relation to good willing and to morally worthy action. I show that certain "moral" feelings (feelings with a rational basis, e.g., "proper" pride and love of man) can become part of the motive of duty itself and so can serve as motives to morally worthy action.

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THE ROLE OF THE EMOTIONS IN THE MORAL LIFE  
ACCORDING TO IMMANUEL KANT

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A DISSERTATION  
in  
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## ABSTRACT

When we strive to better ourselves morally, what aspects of our humanity do we bring into play? In my dissertation, I consider Kant's answer to this question. The fact that Kant held moral obligation to be reason-based, moral action to be rational and voluntary, and feelings to be largely irrational and beyond our control does not entail that he denied feelings a role in the moral life. Against common misconceptions of Kant as a philosopher who neglects the emotional aspects of moral life, I show that he actually considers our emotional dispositions to be valuable tools for perfecting ourselves morally, i.e., for fulfilling all our duties and striving to do so from respect for the moral law. Feelings such as love, respect, and pride can help us increase our moral perfection because they make us less prone to act in morally unacceptable ways and more prepared to carry out our various duties. Because such feelings help us carry out our duties, it is our duty to cultivate them.

I show not only that it is incumbent on us to cultivate morally beneficial emotions, but also how we can do it. Building on Kant's vague hints about what the process involves, I argue that cultivating a given feeling requires, above all, sharpening one's judgment about it, one's sensitivity to its nature and to the shape it takes in one's own character. This enables one to make responsible decisions about whether to act on the feeling and, when one



does choose to act on it, to express it in a way which is dignified and which harmonizes with one's sense of moral integrity. Cultivating morally beneficial feelings also involves refining the feelings themselves through participating in society and in culture--shaping emotional bonds through friendship and engaging in art, sports, and the like as creator as well as consumer.

I begin with an argument showing that on Kant's mature moral theory, it is our duty to cultivate feelings which help us form a virtuous disposition. I then discuss particular feelings which are especially important in this regard. I begin with the feeling of respect for the moral law and show that it constitutes the motive of duty. Kant's "pure" moral motive--the motive of duty--is thus actually a feeling which is grounded in a rational grasp of the moral law. I then consider feelings associated with our duties toward ourselves (e.g., pride and courage) and with our duties toward others (e.g., love and respect) and raise the question of how cultivated feelings figure in the virtuous character and also in relation to good willing and to morally worthy action. I show that certain "moral" feelings (feelings with a rational basis, e.g., "proper" pride and love of man) can become part of the motive of duty itself and so can serve as motives to morally worthy action.

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## INTRODUCTION

When we strive to better ourselves morally, what are we doing? What aspects of our humanity do we bring into play? I will here consider Kant's answer to these questions.

At first glance, Kant's picture of morally-engaged humanity looks bleak and over-intellectualized. He seems to admit only our purely rational side into the arena of moral assessment and activity: moral willing and acting are based on our rational grasp of the moral law and its requirements. The emotions seem barred from playing any motivating role in moral life--even from being proper objects of moral assessment--because, as Kant so often says, they are not only irrational (unable to judge the rightness of actions) but also, to a great extent, beyond our control.<sup>1</sup> Since

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<sup>1</sup>In this work, I use the terms "feeling" and "emotion" (as well as their plurals) interchangeably to refer not only to episodic feelings but also to our dispositions to feel them and to the attitudes and habits of thought which underlie those dispositions, all of which are part of a person's character. These terms, together with the apt but unfortunately outdated term, "sentiment," cover the broad range of feelings I take to be covered by Kant's use of "Gefühl." That I use the terms interchangeably might strike some readers as misleading given their sometimes disparate meanings. The reader might, for instance, think I'm going to show that strong emotions such as rage and lust play a key part in moral life, for Kant, and might then be disappointed to find that a substantial part of my discussion focuses on a comparatively pallid class of "reason-based" feelings (the "moral" feelings) which might even strike some as mere arid caricatures of natural emotions. To forestall disappointment, I assure the reader that I will show that all our feelings--including those which are nature-based (some of which might even underlie our vices)--can be brought to bear on our moral improvement, but that only the "moral" feelings can motivate us in morally worthy action because they alone stem from

moral praise and blame attach only to voluntary actions, and since moral actions must spring from the good will which acts from the reason-based motive of duty, the emotions appear to be neither morally valuable nor morally relevant, on Kant's view.

I hope to show that such an intellectualistic rendering of the Kantian virtuous character, while containing a kernel of truth, is incomplete and crude in its conception of feeling. The kernel of truth is that morality is reason-based rather than nature-based, for Kant. Natural feelings, such as the sympathy which might move me to help somebody who has fallen on the street, are neither lasting enough nor evenly enough distributed to provide a universally accessible foundation for morality. In order to be accessible to every human being and safe from the misfortunes of circumstance and the inequity of natural endowments, the moral motive must be grounded in something so essential to humanity that everybody can be expected to have it. That common element is reason.

By locating the moral law in common human reason, Kant gives morality--and in particular, moral motivation--the stable foundation it needs. Since the moral motive (respect for the moral law, or the motive of duty in its most basic form) is always available for us to act on in virtue of our

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an awareness of the moral law or of its specific obligations. This sense of duty, however, can join with natural feelings in several ways, illustrated in Chapters 3-5.

reason, Kant makes morality a matter of choice rather than of luck. Only by acting from the motive of duty do we show a direct concern for the rightness and/or moral permissibility of our actions. Because it embodies a direct concern for (and, when engaged, awareness of) the rightness of our actions, respect for the moral law--unlike feelings such as sympathy--can't "misfire" by sometimes leading us to wrong action.<sup>2</sup> And in the absence of a fully worked-out moral theory which is feeling-based--say, a theory showing how love can, without the assistance of reason, not only give rise to obligations but also be intrinsically principle-guided and hence not blind--we have to take Kant's word on the inadequacies and real dangers of feeling-based ethical theories.

The kernel of truth--that morality is based on pure reason, for Kant--has led philosophers to criticize him for having an alienated and skeletal conception of the morally engaged self. The common core of the criticism is that he fails to give sufficient moral credit to the sensible, nature-based aspects of humanity. If to be morally good is to know what duty demands and to act from that sense of duty, and to have a sense of duty is just to be aware of the moral law, then morality, for Kant, reduces to being

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<sup>2</sup>Barbara Herman gives the example of being led by one's sympathy to help some art thieves load their getaway car (Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," The Practice of Moral Judgment, pp.4-5).

responsive to principle. But responsiveness to principle is not all there is to being a virtuous person. Feeling the right emotions in the right sorts of circumstances is an aspect of good moral character that Kant seems to ignore.

Schiller began the critical trend, arguing that respect for the moral law is not in fact the highest moral ideal because it can only arise from a sense of mastery over, rather than cooperation with, the inclinations. Instead of the dutiful soul, Schiller suggests, the beautiful soul should be our moral ideal--the soul which "feels able to trust to the impulse of desire without running the risk of offending morality."<sup>3</sup>

Bernard Williams is a prominent thinker to join the trend of late, launching a multi-fronted attack against Kant's apparent devaluation of the emotions. Williams argues that far from playing any minor role in the moral life, the emotions are actually what give sense to moral practices: it is only by seeing a person's actions as expressive of an underlying emotion, e.g., compassion, that we can make sense of her actions at all.<sup>4</sup> On Williams' view, the emotions are central aspects of an individual's moral character--a position that Kant with his principle-based ethics cannot possibly seem to share.

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<sup>3</sup>Schiller, "On Loveliness and Dignity," Schiller's Completed Works, p.473.

<sup>4</sup>"Morality and the Emotions," Problems of The Self, p.222.

But the fact that Kantian morality is reason-based does not entail that the emotions have no place in it. Only if we think of emotions as natural events which take place in us entirely independently of our choices do we need to exclude them from the realm of morality, the realm of the voluntary. I wish to suggest that Kant did not think of all feelings as nature-based. On Kant's view, there is a privileged class of feelings which is reason-based. This class includes feelings such as respect, the workings of conscience, proper pride, and the love of mankind. These feelings are not mere impulses: they follow upon rational judgments--in particular, upon a proper grasp of the moral law and the realization that we ourselves are the authors of its duties. Since we control our reflection on the moral law and our attentiveness to the ways in which its requirements are specific to our finite nature and manifest themselves in particular circumstances, the cultivation of feelings based on such reflection also lies within our power. This special class of emotions can therefore be admitted into the moral arena from the very outset.

What I wish in particular to consider with regard to these "moral" feelings is what their relation is to the broader range of natural feelings and what they can do to bring the latter in line with the requirements of reason. I will give a catalogue of the three main types of moral feeling in Kant's theory, showing, for each one, what its

role is in morality and how it can be cultivated. I will also discuss the cultivation of feelings which are not strictly "moral" in that they are not preceded by consciousness of the moral law, but which are still instrumental to morality in ways yet to be specified.

The project is thus to show the importance of the emotions in Kant's conception of the moral life. I argue that respect, in particular, has a certain primacy in Kant's theory because it makes us heed others' (as well as our own) dignity. It also tempers feelings such as love, which when left unchecked can become morally harmful.

In Chapter 1, I give the argument that there is room for the emotions in Kant's mature, reason-based system. I begin by considering Kant's seemingly inconsistent remarks about the relation between anthropology (the empirical study of human beings) and a metaphysics of morals (an a priori body of moral principles). I argue that anthropological knowledge is the material to which Kant applies the moral law in order to yield the specific duties confronting us. I then turn to the question of how moral worth, the highest value in Kant's system of ethics, can attach to emotionally motivated actions. Morally worthy actions, according to Kant, are those which are motivated by respect for the moral law. I argue that feelings which have been cultivated with an eye to moral ends contain within themselves a kernel of respect for the moral law, and so, can serve as morally



worthy motives. I conclude with a catalogue of the three main types of morally beneficial feelings--duty-feelings, dignity-feelings, and helping feelings--which I discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the feeling of respect for the moral law and explain why it constitutes the only morally worthy motive, in Kant's eyes. Against "formalist" commentators, who see respect as a purely intellectual grasp of the moral law, I argue that respect is a reason-based feeling, differing from other emotions in that it follows a proper reflection on the law. I also argue that the moral law must be grasped in the right sort of way--as embodying the concept of duty--in order for us to feel respect for it. In order to grasp the law in this way, we must consider it from an appropriate standpoint, namely, an awareness that we are finite rational beings, not pure intellects. Only then can we feel the humility which constitutes the "negative" side of respect. The importance of a proper self-conception in our reflection on the moral law is often neglected in discussions of Kant's conception of respect. I seek to remedy that situation and at the same time to show why reflection on our finite rational identity does not threaten the autonomy of morality by introducing incentives "extraneous" to the moral law itself.

In Chapter 3, I consider the feelings which stem from a recognition of our unconditional worth. These "dignity-

feelings"--pride, courage, love of honor, and the workings of conscience--serve primarily, though not exclusively, to help us carry out our duties toward ourselves. Heeding our sense of dignity and cultivating related emotions, I argue, is a main avenue toward shaping a distinctive character, where "character" is to be understood not only in the moral sense of the good character who lives up to the principles of morality, but also in a more individualized sense, as the character who has a sense of her own individuality and is able to trust and enjoy her emotions because she has unified them in accordance with the idea of her dignity. By considering specific character types with different strengths and weaknesses--that is, different needs for moral improvement--I show that cultivating character in both of these senses is morally incumbent on us, for Kant.

I also consider the moral feelings associated with good or bad conscience: self-respect and guilt, respectively. There is a danger, in Kant's duty-oriented theory, of acquiring what he calls a "tyrannical" conscience which blames one for having failed to do one's duty even where one has done everything one could rationally be expected to do. Even though supererogation is not a problem for Kant in the way it is for utilitarians, the ever-present possibility of being tempted to violate our duties can lead to a tyrannical conscience. Although Kant himself proposes no solution for how to avoid such a conscience, I give my own solution by

showing how to weaken morally harmful inclinations without compromising one's own individuality.

In Chapter 4, I consider feelings which help us carry out our duties toward others--notably sympathy, love and respect for others. Like the "dignity-feelings" discussed in Chapter 3, these feelings must be cultivated in accordance with moral principles and ends in order to receive proper expression. But they differ from dignity-feelings in that they are essentially sociable (not self-directed) in character.

The central feeling here is the love of mankind. While Kant says that it cannot be a duty to have this feeling, since love cannot be felt out of the constraint inherent in the thought of duty, it is still a duty to cultivate it by practicing beneficence (DV:401-2). Kant's assumption here is that by doing good to others, we will come to love them (DV:402, 457). Although this is a tenuous assumption, I try to make it more plausible by considering concrete situations in which we do help other people. I argue that the social graces are an especially fruitful ground for cultivating our love of man.

I also show, however, that love of man, interpreted as a direct concern for the well-being of others, must be understood *pas part* and parcel of the motive of duty itself as it manifests itself in the morally mature agent.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the type of love manifested in interpersonal relations such as friendship, rather than on the more broadly directed love of mankind (though these are related). Against critics such as Williams, who argues that Kant is wrong to make duty rather than affection the proper motive even in such intimate relations such as that between man and wife, I argue that interpersonal relations do, and should, involve obligations, and that Kant rightly sees this. This does not preclude them from manifesting love. Love, for Kant, is conditioned by principles and tempered by respect. Only by respecting the loved one can the lover heed the loved one's wants rather than imposing her own conception of happiness on him. Respect towards others is thus needed for us to be able to fulfil our duties of love, a prominent one being our duty to promote others' happiness.

I hope, in the end, to suggest that morality and happiness are actually closer in Kant's system than he leads us to think. Morality requires unifying one's emotions in accordance with moral principles. But a unified self is precisely what happiness consists in, according to Kant. I suggest that the moral emotions provide a "middle realm" between reason and inclination, which the inclinations can see as an "ally" and which reason approves of morally. Through the cultivation of moral feeling, the inclinations are at least partly satisfied in a morally acceptable manner. The cultivation of moral feeling is therefore one

of the ways of realizing highest good in the world:  
happiness in proportion to virtue.

## Chapter 1: The Moral Relevance of Emotion

Kant is commonly taken to hold an inadequate if not downright crude view of the emotions and their place in the moral life.<sup>1</sup> This assumption is made not only by his critics but also by some of his commentators. At first glance, the assumption seems well-founded. Even if one recognizes that Kant does give certain feelings a role in the moral life, one can legitimately complain that his catalogue is incomplete: his discussion focuses primarily on love and respect (the latter of which many hold not even to be a genuine feeling, for Kant), but surely feelings such as fear, pride and envy have morally important functions which warrant discussion.

There are three central ideas in Kant's moral system which seem to support the conclusion that Kant did not take the emotions seriously. The first is that since feelings cannot serve as a basis for moral obligation, the moral law is rooted in pure reason and not in natural feelings (DV:376-8)<sup>2</sup> The second claim is that our actions are morally worthy only when we are motivated by the thought of duty, ie., the self-constraint we experience when we reflect

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<sup>1</sup>I henceforth use "emotion" and "feeling" interchangeably, except when one of them is more appropriate to the context. See footnote 1 of the Introduction for a discussion of my use of these terms and their relation to the more outdated (though popular in the 18th Century) term, "sentiment."

<sup>2</sup>I discuss this claim in greater detail in Chapter 2.

on the moral law (DV:379-80). We experience the moral law as constraining because it sets a limiting condition on the principles or maxims (subjective principles of reason; G:422n) on which we propose to act: it tells us to act only on those maxims which could at the same time serve as universal laws (MM:214). Since we are finite rational beings, we will always have (or will at least always be prone to develop) inclinations which tempt us to adopt non-universalizable or immoral maxims. Even if our inclinations are such that they by and large harmonize with moral requirements, we will always experience some constraint in the thought of duty, given that inclinations are changeable and we cannot count on them always harmonizing with the moral law.<sup>3</sup>

Before considering the third claim, it may be helpful to understand why it is only actions motivated by duty (the feeling of obligation which stems from our awareness of the moral law) which have moral worth. When we allow ourselves to be so motivated, we are acting out of a direct concern for the morality of the action.<sup>4</sup> Kant maintains that when

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<sup>3</sup>Because we are finite, we are also vulnerable to the fluctuations of circumstance. We are never fully in control of our emotions; and given a time of weakness and a sufficiently hateful individual, even the most virtuous individual may one day find herself tempted to murder.

<sup>4</sup>In interpreting the motive of duty this way, I am following Barbara Herman in "On Acting from the Motive of Duty," The Practice of Moral Judgment, Chapter 1. Herman interprets Kant as claiming that only action from obligatory maxims can have moral worth. This certainly harmonizes with Kant's account at MM:222-

we act in this way, our will embodies the valuable state of autonomy, or "inner freedom."

That autonomy is a state of freedom is easy to see if we compare it to its opposite, heteronomy. Heteronomy is the state of will in which we allow ourselves to be motivated by idiosyncratic desires, and so, share no common vantage point with others. Autonomy, by contrast, is a condition in which we know that our reasons for acting are universally acceptable, since we have tested them against the moral law.<sup>5</sup> Since, as practically rational beings, we are the authors of the law and of the duties it imposes on

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3. However, Kant sometimes also suggests that action from permissible maxims can also have moral worth. He says, for instance, that all that we need to do to have a good will--that is, for our actions to have moral worth--is to be concerned with the morality of our actions, and we express this concern by testing our maxim against the categorical imperative (G:403). Since permissible maxims also satisfy the requirements of the categorical imperative, this suggests that they, like obligatory maxims, can be acted on from the motive of duty. I believe this commits Kant to the possibility of permissible actions having moral worth, even though it is hard to see exactly what the motivational structure would be in such cases. The thought of duty (in the form of "I am not violating duty") would probably cooperate with the inclination which originally gave rise to the permissible maxim.

<sup>5</sup>Jay Wallace claims that the value of autonomy lies in this freedom from countervailing reasons. When we act autonomously, that is, when our principle of action is the moral law, we ensure that we are acting on a maxim to which any other rational agent could in principle consent. We are thus acting in a way which is independent of personal differences in desires or inclinations. Since no reasons can be offered against autonomous actions, they have a freedom which heteronomous actions lack--namely, a freedom from countervailing reasons ("Kant on Moral Worth and Moral Luck," unpublished manuscript, pp.10-11, 20). I believe that this is part of Kant's thought, but that the ultimate value of autonomy lies in the fact that it embodies a universal yet self-imposed obligation.



us (CPrR:31, 87; MM:227; G:431), acting from duty is the same as acting from a self-imposed yet universal obligation. This amounts to the positive freedom of governing oneself by reasons which are universally valid.

In acting from the thought of duty, we realize autonomy or "inner freedom." Since the thought of duty depends on an awareness of the moral law, autonomy is equivalent to governing oneself by pure reason. In light of these two claims, it is easy to understand Kant's third, rather stern-sounding claim that:

Since virtue is based on inner freedom, it contains a positive command to man, namely to bring all his capacities and inclinations under his (reason's) control and so to rule over himself, which goes beyond forbidding him to let himself be governed by his feelings and inclinations (the duty of apathy); for unless reason holds the reins of government in its own hands, man's feelings and inclinations play the master over him (DV:408).

Emotions and inclinations must be checked by reason because otherwise they become our dominant motives and produce a heteronomous state of will. Since autonomy is so central to the moral life, and autonomy seems incompatible with being governed by emotions, the emotions do not seem to play any significant role in the moral life for Kant. The three aforementioned claims convey the impression that the moral

life is one in which reason must suppress the emotions so as to have sole reign over the moral subject.

I want to show that this impression is mistaken. Kant says that the moral life is a life in which reason should govern the emotions and inclinations; he does not say that reason should play the tyrant. Not all inclinations are hostile to reason's moral ends; thus, not all inclinations must be fought or suppressed.\* Only those dispositions which are opposed to our adoption of moral ends must be fought. In man's struggle for virtue, "the vices, the brood of dispositions opposing the law, are the monsters he has to fight" (DV:405, my emphasis). Those inclinations and emotions favorable to the adoption of moral ends are not, in and of themselves, bad (though irrational use of them can become vicious); quite on the contrary, Kant considers them good (R:51). Thus, we have no reason to fight them; indeed, fighting them can be harmful. Rather than claiming that the emotions cannot enter into the moral life, Kant even argues that we have a duty to cultivate emotions which help shape a moral disposition. Far from doing the job of morality single-handedly, reason enlists certain emotions to help us cultivate a morally good disposition.

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\*This has been convincingly shown by Michael Seidler in his helpful article, "Kant and the Stoics on the Emotions," Philosophical Research Archives, Volume VII, 1981, ed. Robert Turnbull (Bowling Green: Philosophy Documentation Center, Bowling Green State University), Microfiches XII-XIII.

My claim that certain emotions play a vital role in the moral life, as Kant conceives of it, raises several difficult questions. Perhaps the most obvious one concerns Kant's sharp distinction between "the moral order" and "the order of nature" (DV:377-8) and his claim that "feeling, whatever may arouse it, always belongs to the order of nature" (DV:377). If feelings belong to the order of nature, how can they ever become part of the moral order? In order to answer this question, we need to begin with a general inquiry into the relation of anthropology (which investigates the natural order, as found in human beings) to a metaphysics of morals (which defines the moral order).

The question about the moral status of feeling is bound up with another problem, namely, how moral worth, the unconditional value in Kant's moral system, can attach to acting from cultivated feelings. For even if the emotions can serve as means which help us act in accordance with duty, and so are instrumental to the fulfillment of our duties in this sense, it is far from clear that they help us act from the motive of duty, the latter being the only morally worthy motive. How, in other words, is the cultivation of the emotions conducive to a good will? Here, it needs to be shown both that feelings can help us adopt moral ends from the right attitude and that moral worth attaches to actions which are undertaken from feelings which have been cultivated with moral ends in mind.

Accordingly, I begin, in Part I, with an architectonic investigation into the relation of anthropology to a metaphysics of morals. In Part II, I consider how moral worth can attach to the cultivation of feelings conducive to a good will, that is, how feeling can become part of a "moral order" at all. In Part III, I give a catalogue of the four main roles that feelings play in the moral life, to be filled out in subsequent chapters.

#### I. The Role of Anthropology in a Metaphysics of Morals

A metaphysics of morals contains the system of duties derived from the moral law, and so, consists of principles prescribing how we ought to act rather than principles which describe how we actually do act. Now, since anthropology "is based on empirical principles" describing how people actually do act, it "is clearly distinguished" from "the moral doctrine of ends" (DV:385), that is, the Doctrine of Virtue, which constitutes the moral, as opposed to legal, part of the metaphysics of morals. A moral doctrine of ends, which prescribes ends which we ought to adopt and seek to realize, cannot be based on generalization from experience, since experience tells us only how people do act and not how they ought to act. A moral doctrine of ends must rather be based on pure reason, for "reason commands how men are to act even though no example of this could be found, and it takes no account of the advantages we can

thereby gain, which only experience could teach us"

(MM:216).

Nevertheless, Kant goes on to emphasize that it does not detract from the purity of the moral law if we apply it to objects of experience. Indeed, we need anthropological knowledge in order to apply the moral law at all. He says:

But just as there must be principles in a metaphysics of nature for applying those highest principles of nature in general to objects of experience, a metaphysics of morals cannot dispense with principles of application, and we shall often have to take as our object the particular nature of man, which is known only by experience, in order to show in [human nature] what can be inferred from universal moral principles. But this will in no way detract from the purity of these principles or cast doubt on their a priori source. That is to say, in effect, that a metaphysics of morals cannot be based on anthropology but can still be applied to it. (MM:216-217)

Anthropology, then, has a distinct relevance to a metaphysics of morals, namely, "to show in [human nature] what can be inferred from universal moral principles." This can mean at least two things. It can mean either (a) introducing facts about man in order to derive from the moral law the actual duties which constitute the metaphysics of morals, or (b) deriving those duties a priori and then

considering them in relation to certain empirical facts in order to determine what they require of us in specific situations. I believe that Kant has both in mind. (b) is covered under the heading of "casuistry," the practice of applying the moral law to specific situations. Casuistry is appended to a metaphysics of morals and describes morally challenging circumstances designed to train the art of judgment (DV:411).<sup>7</sup> But how can Kant also intend (a)?

The problem in showing how Kant can intend (a) is to show how the duties in the Doctrine of Virtue can be derived from the moral law in combination with select empirical elements and still be binding, i.e., oblige and motivate us with a necessity that can only be found a priori. If we presuppose empirical facts about man in our derivation of duties from the moral law, do we not threaten to reduce these "duties" to mere empirical generalizations lacking the obligatory force of commands?

That depends on where in the derivation we introduce the empirical elements. If we allow them to precede the moral law, we involve ourselves in the contradiction of trying to preserve obligation while at the same time doing away with it. It is contradictory to take, for example, man's desire for happiness (an empirical datum) as basic, and argue that man can best find happiness by acting from

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<sup>7</sup>For a helpful discussion of the relation of casuistry to the metaphysics of morals, see Mary Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, pp.14-17.

duty. For on such an account, moral "duties" are mere counsels of prudence on which we act not from the motive of duty, but from that of happiness. So if we subordinate the moral law to facts about what man actually desires, we do away with obligation altogether--a mistake with which Kant charges the eudaemonists, who take the satisfaction of our preferences as primary, and so end up with merely hypothetical, not categorical, imperatives (DV:377-8).

If, however, we begin with the moral law and then ask what features of human agency we need to be aware of in order to act morally, we preserve the binding force of the law while also being able to introduce facts about man to derive the duties relevant to human agents. For the duties confronting us do have a special character. The duties of a metaphysics of morals pertaining to a different species of rational beings would look quite different. For instance, if there existed rational beings who were finite (had inclinations which can oppose the law) but immortal, they would have no duty to refrain from committing suicide, since that is not possible for them.\* Now, it would seem plausible to assume that whatever differences exist between

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\*Onora O'Neill makes a similar point in "Universal Laws and Ends in Themselves," Constructions of Reason (CR), p.137. In general, she is very sensitive to the special shape that our duties take because of the fact that we are finite rational beings. See CR, pp.101, 114-15, 118, 125, 140-1. Mary Gregor, in The Laws of Freedom, p.5, gives the capacity for suicide as an example of an empirical fact about human beings that is needed to derive the specific duties of the Metaphysics of Morals.

duties confronting us and duties confronting other (imaginable) rational beings are due to empirical differences alone, and that the principles of reason itself are the same for all species of rational beings. This, however, is not the case. The moral law confronts human reason in a special way, taking on formulations specific to human agency. Reason, in other words, is sensitive to the fact that when it subsists in finite agents, its commands must take a special form.

In order to determine the relation of anthropology to a metaphysics of morals, we need to establish which aspects of the special character of our duties come from reason, and which come from empirical information. How, then, does our finite rational agency affect the way the moral law itself confronts us? The first feature to note is a formal one. Human reason, fully aware that it subsists in beings who do not by nature act on the moral law (G:413), presents the moral law to us not as a description of the way we do act (as it does to God), but rather as a command for how we should act--a categorical imperative: "So act that the maxim of your action could become a universal law" (DV:389, G:421). Thus, reason presents its requirements to us as duties.

In addition to this purely formal feature, the categorical imperative contains a reference to agency. Practical reason is by nature concerned with agency; that is



why it is practical reason. Now, Onora O'Neill points out that it is a "fundamental requirement of practical reason" that agents "should not have ruled out all action."<sup>9</sup> This means not only that it be possible (consistent) to will the maxim of the proposed action<sup>10</sup>--i.e., that agency be preserved--but also that agency be promoted through the furtherance of the ability of ourselves and others to set and realize ends. The Formula of Universal Law quoted above does not explicitly contain this reference to promoting agency, but the second formulation of the categorical imperative, the Formula of the End-in-Itself, does: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity whether in you own person or in the person of another, never simply as a means,

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<sup>9</sup>Onora O'Neill, Constructions of Reason, p.99.

<sup>10</sup>In order for it to be possible to will a maxim, the maxim must be consistent with its universalized typified counterpart (UTC), i.e., with the universalized maxim as it would appear in this world, along with the conditions necessary to realize it in this world. The negation of a maxim instantiating a perfect duty contradicts its UTC in the sense that it would be impossible to carry out the maxim in a world reflecting the UTC. For instance, I could not make a false promise in a world in which everyone knows promises to be false, since no one would believe me (G:422). The negation of a maxim instantiating an imperfect duty contradicts not its UTC as such, but the means necessary for carrying out the maxim. For instance, I cannot will a maxim of non-beneficence because I am not self-sufficient, and will therefore need the help of others to carry out some of my ends (the fulfillment of which I necessarily will, as an agent). In the UTC of maxim of non-beneficence, the means toward the fulfillment of some of my ends would thus be unavailable. For a helpful discussion of these examples and, in general, of the nature of universalizability in Kant, see Onora O'Neill (then Onora Nell), Acting on Principle, Chapter 5. For Kant's own characterization of the difference between permissible, obligatory and forbidden maxims, see MM:221-8.

but always at the same time as an end" (G:429).<sup>11</sup>

Humanity, Kant explains, is equivalent to agency, the ability to set ends and to realize them (DV:395). To treat humanity "never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" is not only to refrain from interfering with the agency of others, but also to help "further the ends of others" (G:430, my emphasis). For human agency is fragile: it can be undermined in ways in which the agency of omnipotent or self-sufficient beings cannot. We need minds and bodies to act, and minds and bodies can be destroyed through suicide, excess, and allowing one's talents to rust; we are able to undermine the agency of others by failing to help and encourage them, emotionally and intellectually as well as physically, to realize their ends, and so forth. This is why practical reason requires of us that we preserve as well as further human agency.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>How the Formula of Universal Law can be equivalent to the Formula of the End-in-Itself even though the former does not explicitly contain a reference to promoting agency is a puzzle that has troubled many Kant commentators. In "Universal Laws and Ends in Themselves," (CR, pp.126-44, esp. pp.131-40), Onora O'Neill does an admirable job of showing the equivalence of the two formulas. See also CR, pp.96-101 and pp.114-15.

<sup>12</sup>Were we to come to interact with another species of rational beings, we would have to consider their specific nature in order to know what the moral law requires of us with respect to them. This will require knowledge of empirical facts about them. For instance, whether it will be a duty for us to promote, in addition to preserving, their agency will depend on whether they are self-sufficient or not. "The problem of organizing a state," says Kant, "can be solved even for a race of devils" ("Perpetual Peace," p.366). Supposing devils are self-sufficient, our only duties towards them will be those of non-interference with their ends, these being the duties relevant to

One could object that the facts about the fragility of human agency I just noted are empirical, and so, cannot derive from pure practical reason. If so, we have already ventured into the anthropological part of the derivation of our duties, losing track of what reason itself contributes to them. Here, we need to be sensitive to exactly what aspects of human agency reason takes into account. The actual formulations of the categorical imperative do not presuppose the facts I just noted. They only presuppose the fact of agency as such--that is, the capacity to set ends and to take pleasure in realizing them. These features belong to all rational agents, not just to human beings.<sup>13</sup> From these two facts about rational agency, Kant derives the two ends which are also duties: one's own perfection and other people's happiness. Very roughly, he derives these obligatory ends as follows. One's perfection consists of one's ability to set and to realize various ends. Moral

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enacting a state. See Onora O'Neill, CR, pp.114-15.

<sup>13</sup>Even God is able to take pleasure in realizing his ends. The book of Genesis is full of references to God's taking pleasure in his creation. After each of the six days of creation, for instance, God sees that what he has created is good. This suggests that God can take some sort of satisfaction--if only intellectual--in the attainment of his ends. Moreover, he creates the garden of Eden in such a way that man can take a sensual and aesthetic delight in its bounty--pleasures which he deems good. We might also speculate that if God could not take some form of pleasure in things--if only intellectual or aesthetic delight--then man would possess some capacities for the good--and hence some capacities for perfection--which God did not. But this would violate the ontological requirement that God be the most perfect being.

ends are of course the most important, since a good will is the only thing in the world which has unconditional worth (G:393-4). But because humanity--the capacity to set any end whatsoever (DV:392)--is a condition of possibility of a good will, humanity is an end in itself and should therefore be cultivated (DV:391-3; G:437-8). The second end, other people's happiness (the realization of their ends), is derived as follows. As agents, we necessarily desire our own happiness, i.e., the realization of our ends. But since we are not self-sufficient, we are required to promote the happiness of others because we ourselves will eventually depend on the help of others to realize some of our ends (DV:387-8, 450-1; G:423, 430).

Now, it will certainly be objected that the end of other people's happiness can only be derived a posteriori, since it presupposes the fact that human beings are not self-sufficient. But reason is responsible for more in this end than meets the eye. For practical reason also requires that we take whatever steps are necessary toward realizing our ends, since willing the means is analytic to willing the end (G:417). In a world of beings who are self-sufficient, it is only a duty to promote one's own happiness and not that of others, since it is possible to universalize a maxim of non-beneficence in such a world: others are fully able to secure their own happiness; hence we need not seek to realize it for them. (But it would presumably still be a

duty to wish the happiness of others in such a world (since wishing one's own happiness requires that one wish that of others, too), but not to will it, i.e., to seek to bring it about). We who are not self-sufficient, however, are required to promote the happiness of others because we ourselves will eventually depend on the help of others to realize some of our ends (DV:387-8, 450-1; G:423, 430). The duty to promote others' happiness, then, stems partly from an empirical fact about us--our finitude--but also from the rational requirement that we promote whatever means are necessary to realize our ends. Indeed, one can see the positive duty to promote the agency of others as a conditional principle of reason. Reason says: "always respect the agency of others, and promote it if they cannot do so themselves." Whether it is necessary to promote the agency of others depends on empirical facts about the type of beings one happens to be surrounded by. But that does not preclude the duty from being inherent in reason itself, prior to empirical considerations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>In The Laws of Freedom, pp.4-5, Mary Gregor provides a different, but to my mind incomplete, solution to the problem of how the duties in the Doctrine of Virtue can admit empirical elements but still retain their binding force. Gregor claims, quite rightly, that there is an ambiguity in Kant's use of "a priori principle." Although Kant distinguishes between pure and a priori knowledge, he fails to observe that distinction in practice. Pure knowledge consists of judgments involving concepts independent of all sense-experience both as regards their content and their mode of connection. A priori knowledge, by contrast, consists of judgments involving concepts which may be derived from sense-experience, but the connection between them must lie ready in the mind (see CPR, B:3-5, B:48-9/A:32-3, A:187-

Having established the sense in which pure practical reason is sensitive to the finitude of human agents, I now turn to the way in which anthropology enters into Kant's derivation of duties in the Doctrine of Virtue. While the two ends which are also duties--one's own perfection and other people's happiness--can be seen as requirements of reason itself, we need empirical information about human beings in order to know how we are to realize these ends in the world in which we live. This information, plus the two obligatory ends, yield the specific duties which constitute the Doctrine of Virtue.

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8/B:230-1). "Pure" thus refers to the content and source of the concepts of judgments, while "a priori" refers to the mode of connection between subject and predicate. While Kant frequently characterizes the duties in the Doctrine of Virtue as "pure" principles, Gregor argues, they are in fact a priori: "We cannot learn from experience that men ought not arbitrarily to destroy their lives. But the concepts thus connected contain elements drawn from sensuous experience; it is from experience that we learn certain characteristics of men implied in this law: the facts that they are mortal and that their lives can be shortened artificially. Such moral laws are a priori knowledge because the connection of subject- and predicate-concepts is made by reason independently of experience. They are not, however, pure knowledge because the matter of the concepts is, in part, given in sensuous experience" (Gregor, p.5). What Gregor fails to explain, however, is how a connection between the sensuously derived concepts appearing in our duties can lie ready in the mind a priori. I find it more convincing to use the analysis of agency just given to establish an a priori connection between the concepts of ends and means, and then to claim that empirical information is needed to realize the means toward an end. In this way, an a priori connection can be seen to hold between one rationally derived concept and one sensuously derived one.

Since most duties in the Doctrine of Virtue are imperfect,<sup>13</sup> they prescribe the adoption of maxims rather than of particular courses of action--the latter being left to the judgment of the agent, as is the case with all imperfect duties (DV:390). The ultimate intent of these duties is, of course, action from the state of will prescribed (see DV:441; LE:143, 200). But because moral worth attaches directly to one's motives and only indirectly to one's actions, it is the cultivation of a moral disposition--a good will--with which is Kant's highest concern in the Doctrine of Virtue: "the highest unconditional end of pure practical reason" is "that virtue be its own end and, despite the benefits it confers on other men, also its own reward" (DV:396). And it is only possible to realize this highest end if one tries with all one's might to cultivate a good will. Thus, in addition to requiring us to promote the two obligatory ends through our fulfillment of the specific duties of virtue (Tugendpflichten), morality also puts us under an "obligation

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<sup>13</sup>The exception is, of course, the perfect duties to oneself of Book I of the Doctrine of Virtue. It is difficult to explain in what sense these duties are perfect, since, in addition to prohibiting certain courses of action (e.g., suicide), they also prescribe certain attitudes appropriate to hold toward oneself (e.g., self-respect), and so, would seem closer to imperfect duties. Kant himself gives no explanation for the presence of perfect duties in the Doctrine of Virtue. For a somewhat helpful discussion of this problem, see Mary Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, Chapters 7 and 8, esp. pp.115-127.

of virtue" (Tugendverpflichtung) requiring us to strive to fulfill the former duties from the motive of duty.

What sorts of psychological tendencies are relevant to Kant's derivation of duties in the Doctrine of Virtue? What distinguishes the facts about man which are morally relevant from those which are not? Recall Kant's claim that in man's struggle for virtue, "the vices, the brood of dispositions opposing the law, are the monsters he has to fight" (DV:405, my emphasis). Vices include both the dispositions which oppose the cultivation of a good will and actions so opposed (duties against the latter prescribe acts of omission, and so, are classified as perfect duties; see DV, Book I). In both cases, knowledge of man's nature is needed to establish the ways in which we can act contrary to the moral law.

As far as sensible dispositions go, Kant distinguishes between affects and passions. An affect is a "rash" or "precipitate" feeling such as anger; it is a "tempest" which "quickly subsides" (DV:407-8). Because of its transitory nature, an affect can "coexist with the best will," reflected in the agent's maxims and settled emotional habits (DV:408). A passion, by contrast, "is a sensible desire that has become a lasting inclination (e.g., hatred, as opposed to anger)" (DV:407-8). A passion such as hatred is morally harmful because "the calm with which one gives oneself up to it permits reflection and allows the mind to form principles upon it and so, if inclination lights upon



something contrary to the law, to brood on it, get it rooted deeply, and so to take up what is evil (as something premeditated) into its maxim. And the evil is then properly evil, that is, a true vice" (DV:408).

Dispositions opposed to a good will include our capacities for envy, greed, and malice; actions so opposed include suicide, gluttony and failure to cultivate our capacities of mind. When such natural dispositions are made a matter of principle--or in Kant's terms, taken up into one's maxim--they become vices, standing in opposition to the moral law either because they debase or even destroy our humanity (by undermining our capacity to set and realize various ends) or because they show a resolve to be indifferent to the ends of others or even to prevent them from attaining their morally permissible ends.

What distinguishes dispositions which are morally relevant from those which are not is thus that the former embody tendencies which, if made a matter of principle, are either virtuous or vicious: maxims based on them either have contradictory negations (in which case cultivating the underlying disposition is a matter of duty) or are themselves contradictory (in which case fighting the underlying disposition is a matter of duty). "Mixed" dispositions--those which can be used for both good and evil--are all morally relevant since they contain capacities

for the good which should be strengthened and capacities for evil which should be weakened.<sup>1\*</sup>

We are now in a better position to understand Kant's claim that "a metaphysics of morals cannot be based on anthropology but can still be applied to it" (MM:217). Anthropology provides information about the subjective tendencies which can either help or hinder the cultivation of a good will, as well as tendencies which are instrumental to the execution of our duties. The moral law, when applied to such anthropological information, yields duties obliging us to cultivate dispositions favorable to our adoption of obligatory ends and to combat dispositions opposed to it. These are the specific duties of the Doctrine of Virtue.

An architectonic difficulty remains, however. I have claimed that anthropology collaborates with principles of reason by providing information about subjective tendencies which either help or hinder the adoption of objective ends.

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<sup>1\*</sup>An example of a "mixed" disposition, which can either favor or oppose the adoption of moral ends depending on what use we make of it, is our "unsociable sociability." Kant says that we are "unable to do without associating peacefully, but also unable to avoid constantly offending one another" (A:183). We tend to take an exaggerated pride in our own achievements and to gloat at other people's failures. At the same time, we cannot do without each other's company (see also "Idea for a Universal History," OH:15). For a general discussion of our unsocial sociability and a helpful summary of the sort of anthropological information that Kant takes to be relevant to his ethical project, see Allen Wood, "Unsociable Sociability: The Anthropological Basis of Kantian Ethics." For further discussion of our unsociable sociability and its implications for Kant's ethical project, see Jerome B. Schneewind, "Kant and Natural Law Ethics," Ethics 104: 53-74.

But there is reason to believe that not even this type of information is allowed into a metaphysics of morals, but rather belongs to a distinct branch of practical philosophy, namely, moral anthropology, which is supposed to have no place in a metaphysics of morals at all. Kant considers moral anthropology to be "the counterpart of a metaphysics of morals," and characterizes it as a science dealing "only with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder men or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals" (MM:217). Now, this seems to describe exactly what I have just claimed that "normal" (as distinct from moral) anthropology does. If so, it seems that no form of anthropology can enter into collaboration with a metaphysics of morals. For Kant says the following about moral anthropology:

It cannot be dispensed with, but it must not precede a metaphysics of morals or be mixed with it; for one would then run the risk of bringing forth false or at least indulgent moral laws, which would misrepresent as unattainable what has only not been attained just because the law has not been seen and presented in its purity (in which its strength consists) or because spurious or impure incentives were used for what is itself in conformity with duty and good. This would leave no certain moral principles, either to guide judgment or to discipline the mind in observance of

duty, the precepts of which must be given a priori by pure reason alone. (MM:217, my emphasis)

If "normal" anthropology does the same thing as moral anthropology, then it would seem that "normal" anthropology has no place in a metaphysics of morals, since moral anthropology "cannot be mixed with" a metaphysics of morals. In order to claim, then, as I want, that anthropology has a legitimate function in a metaphysics of morals (namely, that a priori principles of reason can be "applied" to anthropological principles, as Kant claims is possible earlier at MM:217), I need to show the difference between moral anthropology and the morally relevant aspects of "normal" anthropology, the former being that branch of practical philosophy which cannot be mixed with a metaphysics of morals.

Kant says about moral anthropology that "it would deal with the development, spreading, and strengthening of moral principles (in education in schools and in popular instruction), and with other similar teachings and precepts based on experience" (MM:217). This suggests that moral anthropology deals primarily with the external conditions for morality rather than with the internal dispositions conducive to a good will. For instance, moral anthropology might deal with ways of improving public education in ways which promote (initially) external conformity to the moral law, with the indirect aim of also strengthening moral

principles in students. The main purpose of moral anthropology would be to encourage people to act in accordance with duty, and indirectly to strengthen a moral disposition in them. This emphasis on action rather than inner disposition would explain why Kant claims that moral anthropology is concerned "only with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder men or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals" (MM:217).

The morally relevant parts of "normal" anthropology, by contrast, are selected because they help promote a morally good disposition. The difference between moral anthropology and the morally relevant parts of "normal" anthropology, then, seems to be that the former is concerned with promoting the external conditions favorable to morality--appropriate curricula, educational methods, and so on--while the latter is concerned with the psychological dispositions which help or hinder the cultivation of a good will.

This would at least explain why "normal" but not moral anthropology has a legitimate function in a doctrine of virtue, which is primarily concerned with strengthening the inner disposition to morality. It does not explain, however, why Kant thinks "normal," but not moral, anthropology is relevant to a metaphysics of morals as a whole--including also the Doctrine of Right, which is concerned not with the cultivation of a good will, but only with external conformity to the moral law. The explanation

for Kant's exclusion of moral anthropology even from a doctrine of right seems to be this. Kant's description of moral anthropology suggests that it is concerned primarily with localized institutions, and not with circumstances obtaining throughout human nature. It might, for instance, consider specific curricula, e.g., those of American public schools, rather than curricula (presumably nonexistent) which are found in schools all over the world. By contrast, the morally relevant parts of "normal" anthropology deals with propensities that can be found in all human beings. For if the specific duties of a metaphysics of morals are to be universally binding, they must be duties which everyone can act on simply in virtue of their human nature, and not in virtue of the specific circumstances they happen to find themselves in. (That is not to say that context is irrelevant to judging how one is to act in specific situations. That, however, requires the art of judgment, which casuistry, moral methodology and, to some extent, aesthetics are supposed to train.) The difference, then, between moral and "normal" anthropology is that the former treats of characteristics found throughout human nature, while the latter considers specific institutions and how to promote morality within them.

Still, it is important to note that both moral anthropology and the morally relevant aspects of "normal" anthropology are divisions of practical philosophy because

they constitute a morally conditioned body of empirical knowledge--a body of empirical knowledge to which moral laws are applied. They thus become part of what Kant calls a "system of freedom" (MM:218). Here is how Kant conceives of a system of freedom, in contrast to a system of nature:

Anything that is practical and possible in accordance with laws of nature (the distinctive concern of art) depends for its precepts entirely upon the theory of nature: Only what is practical in accordance with laws of freedom can have principles that are independent of any theory; for there is no theory of what goes beyond the properties of nature. Hence, philosophy can understand by its practical part (as compared with its theoretical part) no technically practical doctrine but only a morally practical doctrine; and if the proficiency of choice in accordance with laws of freedom, in contrast to laws of nature, is also to be called art here, by this would have to be understood a kind of art that makes possible a system of freedom like a system of nature, truly a divine art were we in a position also to carry out fully, by means of it, what reason prescribes and put the Idea of it into effect. (MM:217-18)

A system of freedom is created according to a morally practical doctrine, while a system of nature encompasses, in addition to the laws of nature, that which is possible

according to a technically practical doctrine. What distinguishes these types of doctrines is the type of concept according to which the will operates. A technically practical doctrine is one in which the will takes its rule from concepts describing how things are. The engineer who wants to build a bridge takes his rules from the laws of physics, chemistry, and engineering (see CJ:173 for some of Kant's examples of technically practical doctrines, including political economy, dietetics and chemistry). A morally practical doctrine, by contrast, is one in which the will works with natural materials (inclinations, institutions), but always takes its law not from nature, but from freedom--from pure reason itself (CJ:171-3)--and so, from how things should be. The internal process of strengthening the moral motive through the removal of opposing inclinations as well as the external process of improving moral education both take place according to moral laws, and thereby become part of a system of freedom.<sup>17</sup>

We are now in a position to consider the role of the emotions in Kant's moral theory. We have already seen that information about our emotional capacities, which anthropology supplies, has a legitimate role in a metaphysics of morals, namely, to yield the specific duties

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<sup>17</sup>Kant's published introduction to the Critique of Judgment contains many references to the role of judgment in especially the first of these processes. See CJ:169-70, 176, 178, and 196-7.



which confront us as human beings--as beings who are not purely rational but have inclinations which sometimes tempt us to deviate from the moral law. We now need to consider more precisely what that role is, and how it affects Kant's conception of virtue. I begin with the question of how cultivating and acting from certain emotions can have any moral value whatsoever, or even be of any moral relevance at all (belong to "the moral order," as Kant puts it), given his claim that "feeling...always belongs to the order of nature" (DV:377). This will help us define the role which cultivating feeling plays in a virtuous character.

## II: Virtue, Moral Worth, and the Emotions

To get a more definite sense of what Kant takes to be the main features of a morally good character, it is helpful to begin by asking why he thinks that a good will is the only unconditionally (absolutely) valuable thing in the world. A good will, at its barest minimum, is defined as the will which intends to act as duty commands and to do so for the sake of duty. I'll return to why the concept of duty holds a special value, for Kant; here the question is why a good will is the most basic moral value.

A good will is the only thing in the world which is good without qualification. A good will is good unconditionally because unlike gifts of nature and of

fortune (e.g., health and wealth) which, though they do have a certain value in themselves, are morally good only under certain qualifications (wealth is good only if put to a good use), a good will is morally good in itself because it wills the right thing for the right reasons (G:437; 393-94).<sup>1\*</sup> The value of the good will, I take it, is that it alone shows a direct concern for the moral rightness of its conduct. The good will manifests itself subjectively (in the phenomenology of good willing) in a willingness to be truthful about one's condition as it relates to the moral sphere: a desire to know oneself while at the same time acknowledging one's limitations and one's moral fallibility. This can only stem from the awareness that one is bound by the moral law and not spontaneously inclined to follow it. The latter feature also reveals what is valuable about the good will. In imposing on itself a universally valid obligation, the good will embodies the valuable state of autonomy, the condition of governing oneself according to reasons which are universally acceptable. Thus the good will cannot go wrong in its willing; its willing is good in itself. Having considered the nature of the good will, we can now turn to the concept of morally worthy action (action from a good will) and how the emotions relate to it.

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<sup>1\*</sup>I take Kant's use of "good" in this section to refer to the morally good, since all the qualifications he makes are qualifications which are relevant only when we are thinking in moral terms. See also Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, Part I for some remarks about the good will and its value.

At first glance, it appears inconceivable, from the point of view of Kant's moral system, that moral worth should be able to attach to the cultivation of the emotions. The chaotic behavior of emotions seems antithetical to the rule-governed activity of the good will issuing forth morally worthy actions. In order to see how acting from cultivated emotions can take on moral worth, we need to understand Kant's conception of morally worthy action; we can then go on to ask how the cultivation of select emotions can have moral worth as well as whether acting from emotions which have been so cultivated can have moral worth.

A morally worthy action, Kant says, must be done not only in accordance with duty, but also from duty: the thought of the moral law, and the sense of constraint that its duties entail, must be the incentive of the action (MM:218-19). Morally worthy action is thus action done from the special feeling of constraint or obligation which the thought of duty imposes on us (DV:381-2, 389). This sets three requirements on the type of will--the good will (G:387-8, 439)--which produces morally worthy action:

- (a) that we freely adopt the end which we seek to realize through the action,
- (b) that the end be obligatory,<sup>1\*</sup>

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<sup>1\*</sup>At G:403 and 437, Kant suggests that permissible maxims can also produce morally worthy actions, as long as they have been tested against the moral law. Presumably the motive of duty would here operate in conjunction with the (uncultivated) inclination which gave rise to the maxim before it was tested for

(c) that we adopt the end not (solely) because we desire it, that is, not (solely) on the basis of a natural inclination, but because it is our duty to adopt the end.

These conditions require some elaboration. I begin with (b), then move on to (c); and finally, to (a).

To adopt an end because it is our duty to do so requires, first of all, that the end be an end which it is also a duty to have. To determine whether our end is obligatory, we submit our maxim (our subjective principle of action; G:422n) "to the condition of its qualifying as universal law" (MM:214). We here impose a formal condition on our maxim, namely, that it be a maxim to which every other rational agent could in principle consent. This condition, however, obtains both for permissible and for obligatory maxims. The difference between obligatory maxims (e.g., "I will strive to cultivate my talents") and permissible maxims (e.g., "I will always eat white rather than red meat") lies in the formal implications of their negations. The negations of obligatory maxims yield contradictions when universalized; those of permissible maxims do not (see footnote 11 for a closer description of what universalization involves and what sort of contradiction is generated by impermissible maxims).

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its permissibility against the moral law.

Acting in a morally worthy way requires not only that our maxim have certain formal features, but also that we have a certain motive. The motive from which an action is performed can be thought of as a second-order component of a maxim, expressing the attitude with which we will the maxim.<sup>20</sup> The attitudinal difference between willing permissible and obligatory maxims can be expressed as follows. When I hold a permissible maxim, I think of my end X as follows: "I want to bring about X, and I am permitted to do so because the moral law allows it." When I hold an obligatory maxim, by contrast, I think: "I have to bring X about because the moral law requires it." Even if I should at the same time desire X, I cannot, in the latter case, hold the following attitude: "I want X, so I'm going to do what I can to bring it about; and X also happens to be my

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<sup>20</sup>A motive is not the (first-order) purposive clause of a maxim, as some Kant commentators think (see, e.g., Onora O'Neill (then Nell), Acting on Principle, pp.84, 97ff), since the purposive clause is reserved to reflect the end of the action and not the motive, which is something quite different. Ends (Zwecke) cannot be equated with motives (Bestimmungsgrunde)--and it is important to notice that Kant himself never makes this equation--because one can will the same end from different motives. This is especially clear in the case of willing obligatory ends (ends which it is a duty to have, and so, which can be acted on in a morally worthy way). For I can will the end, say, of other people's happiness from the motive of duty, from warm fellow-feeling, from pity, from the aesthetic satisfaction I get when I see others enjoying themselves, from a thirst for popularity, and from a number of other motives. The actions I undertake to realize the end of other people's happiness can be the same in all cases, and the realization of my end is also the same, namely, that some of ends of the person whose happiness I will are furthered or realized. But I can act toward that end from a variety of motives, and that is why motives must not be identified with ends.

duty." Rather, I must think: "X is my duty, and I am going to bring it about for that reason. I also happen to desire X, but I know I would have to realize X even if I did not desire it--and it is always possible for such a situation to occur, because I am a finite being, and, as such, will always have inclinations which can oppose the law" (see DV:397, 409, 441).<sup>21</sup> Acting from the awareness of duty, then, requires that a certain thought process accompany one's willing--a thought process characterized by a feeling of constraint and an awareness of one's finitude. This is the attitudinal, or motivational, difference between willing permissible maxims and willing obligatory maxims.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>The phrase, "I realize I would have to do X even if I did not desire it" should not be interpreted as a counterfactual clause indicating what an agent would do in different circumstances. It should not be confused with a (misguided, because irrelevant) measure of a heroically strong will which would bring about the action even in the face of the most gruelling obstacles (e.g., extreme pain resulting from torture). (For an illuminating discussion of why counterfactual claims about what an agent would do in different circumstances are irrelevant to the moral worth of her maxims, see Jay Wallace, "Kant on Moral Worth and Moral Luck" (unpublished), esp. pp.30-31.) The counterfactual clause in question does not indicate what an agent would do under different circumstances, but expresses an attitude toward the moral law and our standing in relation to it: the awareness that it binds us regardless of what we happen to feel or desire. This thought--essentially the thought which Wallace, at p.20 in the aforementioned paper, describes as "an unconditional commitment to duty," a preparedness to act dutifully regardless of what one's inclinations are or will be in the future--must accompany every morally worthy action, and is captured by the sense of constraint we feel when we think of the law and the duties it imposes on us.

<sup>22</sup>I here differ from Onora O'Neill, who suggests that moral worth can attach also to the adoption of permissible maxims (see O'Neill, CR, p.141). Her reason for claiming this depends on Kant's thesis of the inscrutability of our motives: we can never

Having clarified conditions (b) and (c), I now turn to condition (a).

Freedom of choice, says Kant, is the condition of possibility of any kind of willing, that is, of our setting any end whatsoever (DV:385, 389). Were we to lose our freedom of choice, we would not be willing anything, but would only be responding to stimuli. This would reduce us to the level of the beasts, who are determined only by sensible stimuli (DV:392, 444-5, MM:213). Freedom of choice, then, is our "independence from being determined by sensible impulses," even though we are still affected by them (DV:213).<sup>23</sup> It is in virtue of our freedom of choice that we can be motivated by the formal considerations inherent in the moral law. Without freedom of choice, we would always need an object of desire in order to act, and

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be sure of our underlying maxim or motive, but it is always our business to ensure that our action conforms outwardly with duty or is at least permissible. Our actual motive, which is always hidden from us, may even in the case of permissible action be that of duty. This is where I differ from O'Neill. I believe that Kant's inscrutability thesis is not as severe as O'Neill makes it sound, and that in fact there are several indicators of moral worth available to us--a significant one being the types of thought processes I just noted. It is fairly clear that the thought process accompanying the adoption of permissible ends is incompatible with the awareness of constraint essential to a sense of duty. Kant thinks we can measure this sense of constraint through the obstacles we are able to overcome in our willing. This gives us a rough, albeit merely subjective, measure of moral worth. I discuss this later in Part II.

<sup>23</sup>Kant characterizes freedom of choice as "negative" freedom in order to distinguish it from the "positive" or "inner" freedom which we realize only when we act from the motive of duty (see DV:213-14).

would always be determined by our strongest desire. But because we have free choice, we do not need to act on our strongest desire, and can also be motivated by non-sensuous, rational considerations. It is because of our freedom of choice, then, that we can act on the moral law even when all our desires seem to oppose it.

We are now in a position to summarize Kant's conception of moral worth as well as the more basic notion of a good will. To have a good will is to freely set an obligatory end out of the awareness of constraint inherent in the thought of duty. Actions which are undertaken through such willing have moral worth. Having clarified Kant's conception of moral worth, I now turn to the difficulties of claiming that moral worth can attach both to the cultivation of morally beneficial emotions and even to acting from emotions which have been cultivated for moral ends.

Feelings possess features which seem to bar them from the moral realm, the realm of the voluntary, altogether. First of all, having feelings cannot be said to be an activity in any legitimate sense of the term. In order to act, one must set oneself an end, and this can only be done through free choice. Kant says the following about the conditions of possibility of action:

Every action...has its end; and since no one can have an end without himself making the object of his choice into an end, to have any end of action whatsoever is an



act of freedom on the part of the acting subject, not an effect of nature. (DV:384-5)

Since effects of nature are not brought about through free willing, they cannot be said to be actions in any legitimate sense of the term. But feelings are effects of nature: "feeling," says Kant, "whatever may arouse it, always belongs to the order of nature" (DV:377). As natural events, feelings do not take place through free choice and in accordance with rational principles, but rather in accordance with laws of nature. We cannot choose to have a feeling, just as we cannot choose to change the laws of nature; we simply have a feeling, just as the laws of nature simply are. Having feelings therefore fails to meet the first requirement on morally worthy action: that they be freely willed.

This also explains why having feelings fails the second requirement. Since feelings are not actions, no end is involved in having a feeling. Thus, a fortiori, feelings cannot be directed at obligatory ends. Similarly, since feelings are, by and large, beyond our control, there can be no duty to have a feeling. Take, for instance, the feeling of love:

Love is a matter of feeling, not of willing, and I cannot love because I will to, still less because I ought to (I cannot be constrained to love); so a duty to love is an absurdity. (DV:401; see also 402)

Since having feelings cannot be made a matter of duty, feelings cannot be chosen from a sense of constraint, and so, fail also the third criterion for moral worth. How, then, can feelings ever become part of the moral order?

It is at this point that Kant makes the crucial distinction between having and cultivating a feeling. Having a feeling cannot be a matter of duty, for the reasons just given, but cultivating feelings is a freely willed activity which is a matter of duty when the feelings in question are conducive to moral ends. Throughout the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant distinguishes between having and cultivating feelings, and stresses that the latter is an activity which is indeed within our power and therefore can be made a matter of duty (see DV:399-402 for especially clear statements of this).<sup>24</sup> If Kant can show that certain feelings are conducive to our setting and realization of moral ends, then he can also hold that cultivating them is a matter of duty.

The sense in which feelings can be conducive to moral ends is by no means transparent. For it would seem that the two obligatory ends--one's own perfection and other people's happiness--are realized in a genuinely moral way only when they are brought about not just in accordance with the moral law, but also from a special motive, namely, respect for

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<sup>24</sup>For a useful discussion of the extent to which, in Kantian ethics, feelings can be cultivated through "the work of freedom," see Mary Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, pp.74, 197-8.

duty or a sense of the rightness of the action itself. And there is only one feeling which can be said to be constitutive of a sense of duty, namely, respect for the law--a feeling which, phenomenologically speaking, is characteristically unpleasant because it involves an awareness of the constraint which duty imposes on us (we are required to do our duty even when we don't feel like it).<sup>29</sup> What, then, of the other feelings--say, love of man--that Kant claims can be conducive to moral ends? How do they help us act morally if such action is morally worthy only when undertaken from respect for the law?

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<sup>29</sup>I am here speaking of the basic phenomenology of respect for duty. As Kant points out in the Critique of Practical Reason, respect for duty also has an uplifting element, namely, an awareness of our own sublimity in being able to act on a law designed by pure reason (Cpr:86-87). But I think this passage has to be read as describing the value of acting from respect from the moral law (from a sense of duty) rather than the attitude from which we generally do so. Even though the passage is found in a chapter entitled "The Incentives of Pure Practical Reason," thus certainly suggesting that acting from respect for the law really amounts to a joyous awareness of living up to our sublimity as its authors, it should be noted that Kant's famous ode to duty (Cpr:86), as purple as it is, raises a philosophical question about its origin ("Duty!...what origin is there worthy of thee...?")--a question which Kant can proudly claim to be the first to have answered adequately (see Chapter 2). As regards the way in which the thought of duty strikes us, however, Kant did not claim any originality: "Who would want to introduce a new principle of morality and, as it were, be its inventor, as if the world has hitherto been ignorant of what duty is or had been thoroughly wrong about it?" (Cpr:8n). I take this to suggest that the thought of duty essentially involves the feeling of constraint which the world had hitherto always recognized to belonging to a sense of obligation. Kant's insight was that duty is a matter of self-constraint--not that the thought of duty, because of our autonomy, is not constraining (see DV:383).

It is important here, I think, to appreciate the structural complexity of moral willing. To consistently will a moral end--and, for that matter, to consistently will any other end--it is not enough merely to wish it to come true; one must also intend to realize it through action (see DV:441; LE:143, 200).<sup>26</sup> This is simply a requirement of rational intending, i.e., of willing. In order for a maxim to be fully universalizable, the means through which we intend to realize an end must be compatible with the end itself. Willing an end, then, imposes certain requirements on the means through which we intend to realize it. Onora O'Neill cites five "Principles of Rational Intending,"<sup>27</sup> implicit in Kant's account of practical reasoning, which set certain rational requirements on the means through which we intend to realize our ends:

- 1) That we intend not only all indispensable and necessary but also some sufficient means toward realizing our end. Otherwise, I could intend to eat an adequate diet but eat no food of any specific sort, on the grounds that no food of any specific sort is indispensable to an adequate diet.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>This point is convincingly made by Onora O'Neill in CR, pp.90-1.

<sup>27</sup>See Onora O'Neill, CR, pp.91-2.

<sup>28</sup>This sort of requirement can be gleaned from DV:391-2, where Kant says it is a duty for us "to make ourselves worthy of humanity and in general, by procuring or promoting the capacity to realize all sorts of possible ends." This section also

2) That we not only intend all necessary and sufficient means toward the end, but also seek to bring them about when they are not available. Otherwise, I could intend to bring about a social revolution but do absolutely nothing, on the grounds that no revolutionary situation obtains. But then I would at best be wishing and not willing a revolution.<sup>29</sup>

3) That we intend not only the instrumental means toward what is intended, but also all necessary and some sufficient components of what is intended (these can also be seen as constitutive means towards our end). For instance, we must show kindness not only in deed but also in word and gesture.

4) That the various constitutive means toward our end be mutually consistent. Otherwise, I could coherently will to be generous to all my friends by giving each the exclusive use of my possessions.<sup>30</sup>

5) That the foreseeable results of our actions be consistent with the underlying end. Otherwise, I could

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implies the second principle of rational intending.

<sup>29</sup>Kant explicitly states this requirement at DV:441 and LE:143, 200.

<sup>30</sup>This sort of requirement is implicit in all the specific duties presented in the Doctrine of Virtue (see DV:453 for one example). Since I will make heavy use of this requirement in subsequent chapters, where I consider the role of the emotions in helping us fulfill the specific duties of the Doctrine of Virtue, I do not cite further examples here.

intend the well-being of a child by protecting her from the pain of a life-saving operation.<sup>31</sup>

These principles demand that we be sensitive to the realities confronting us. When we rationally intend an end, we show a knowledge of what is required to realize our ends in this world. While O'Neill's examples focus primarily on the external conditions that we need to intend in order for our willing to be rational, I think the same principles can be applied to our internal disposition. Since we always have attitudes and inclinations which can oppose a moral cast of mind, the principles of rational intending call upon us continually to cultivate all dispositions compatible with, constitutive of, and conducive to our adoption of obligatory ends.

According to the principles of rational intending, the intention to cultivate such dispositions is part of the intention to cultivate a virtuous frame of mind--the highest end of the Doctrine of Virtue (DV:387, 392-3, 396). For if we are truly aware of our finitude, and so, have the sense of reality reflected in the principles of rational intending, we know that we will always have dispositions to oppose the law, and that these dispositions need continually to be fought. We will therefore realize that virtue is not

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<sup>31</sup>This sort of requirement is implicit in all of Kant's illustrations of the application of the categorical imperative at G:421-3 and 429-430. For a helpful discussion of this procedure, see Onora O'Neill (then Nell), Acting on Principle, pp.69-93.

something we can attain or keep without considerable effort, and that we need to use all means available to us in striving for it. (That is why Kant says that "Virtue is always in progress and yet always starts from the beginning" (DV:409; see also 397).)<sup>32</sup> If certain emotions are conducive to a moral frame of mind, it is therefore imperative on us to cultivate them as part of our efforts to attain a virtuous disposition.

This gives us the key to how moral worth can attach to the cultivation of those emotions which help us shape a virtuous frame of mind. The cultivation of morality in us is one of the special duties belonging to the obligatory end of our own perfection (DV:392-3). If we adopt this end, then we must also intend to pursue the means necessary to realize it, since rationality requires of us that we will the means needed to realize our ends. If, moreover, we adopt, from a sense of duty, the intention to cultivate a virtuous disposition, then we also, from a sense of duty, intend the necessary, sufficient and constitutive means

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<sup>32</sup>This claim, and the facts about our finite nature leading up to it, bears against Mary Gregor's interpretation of the highest end of the Doctrine of Virtue. She claims that this end is a state of "inner freedom," which she describes as "a condition in which our power of choice is free from the influence of sensuous inclination as such and open to that of pure practical reason with its motive of duty" (Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, p.27, my emphasis. See also p.67). But it should be clear by now that we are never free from the influence of sensuous inclination as such. We therefore need a different interpretation of virtue as "inner freedom," which I supply later in Part II.

toward realizing that end. Thus, the activity of cultivating the emotions conducive to a virtuous frame of mind is itself a manifestation of a good will, and our efforts to cultivate such emotions have moral worth.

While respect is prominent among those dispositions of feeling which are either conducive to or presupposed by our acting from a sense of duty, it is by no means the only one. In Part IV, I will catalogue the four main groups of feeling which Kant recognizes to be helpful to adopting and fulfilling obligatory ends, and will also briefly describe the specific ways in which each type of feeling is conducive to, and in some cases even presupposed by, acting from the motive of duty. In subsequent chapters, I will address the issue of how not only cultivating but also acting from emotions which have been cultivated out of a sense of duty can have moral worth. The account will be supplemented by a detailed discussion of specific feelings and the process through which we cultivate them.

It might seem that feelings other than respect for the moral law can at best play an instrumental rather than a constitutive role in the virtuous disposition--that is, that cultivating various emotions can at best make us more likely to adopt and realize moral ends, but that, in order to be morally worthy, the actual adoption and realization of those ends must be done solely from respect for the law. Since I want to make the stronger claim that cultivating not just



respect, but many other emotions as well, is actually constitutive of a virtuous frame of mind--albeit from a subjective point of view--I need to show how the cultivation of morally beneficial feelings fits into Kant's broader conception of virtue.

### III. Two Conceptions of Virtue

In the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant gives two definitions of virtue the equivalence of which is not immediately apparent. The first is the following: "Man's greatest moral perfection is to do his duty from duty (for the law to be not only the rule but also the incentive of his actions)" (DV:392). Since I have already clarified this conception of virtue, I will not do so again here. Suffice it to say that this is the conception of virtue which is traditionally attributed to Kant and for which he is most warmly lauded by friends and most hotly criticized by enemies. The merits of this conception of virtue, in the eyes of Kant's friends, are that it confirms our nature as free and rational beings and makes virtue accessible to everyone as a result. It is possible for everyone to be virtuous, on this definition, since we all have access to the moral law and have the freedom of choice to be motivated by it even when all of our inclinations oppose it.

This also happens to be what strikes Kant's critics as reprehensible. Virtue, in their eyes, is a settled disposition which needs to be cultivated, and not a power we have in virtue of some mysterious free will. Aristotelian critics say that the process of cultivation takes place through habituation, which brings our sensible side in harmony with our rational side. In their eyes, it is impossible to act morally if all our inclinations oppose reason; hence Kant's definition strikes them as unrealistic, if not absurd. Empiricist critics claim that since reason is inert, it is not reason but emotion which guides the virtuous disposition. Here, too, cultivation enters in because we need to allow ourselves to be motivated only by emotions which are morally appropriate, notably sympathy. While this takes place through a reflective process, it is nonetheless feeling itself, and not any reason-based moral law, which gives the motive for acting morally. The common gist of both criticisms is that virtue requires work on the emotions either through habituation or through reflection.

Ironically, Kant's second definition of virtue acknowledges precisely this requirement. "Virtue," says Kant, "signifies a moral strength of the will" (DV:405). Since "strength of any kind can be recognized only by the obstacles it can overcome, and in the case of virtue these obstacles are natural inclinations" (DV:394), virtue, on this definition, is "the strength of [man's] resolution in

conflict with powerful opposing inclinations" (D:477). A virtuous person, on this definition, does not have a free will as much as a strong will, the power of which is measured by the obstacles it can overcome. Even though this conception of virtue is a far cry from the Aristotelian and empiricist conceptions in that it recognizes conflict and struggle as moral realities while the others see virtue as a harmonious state, it is still closer to them than the previous definition because it introduces the concept of strength of will, which can be acquired only through cultivating inclinations favorable to the adoption of moral maxims and fighting those opposed to the same.

But precisely because the second definition is closer to the "enemy" conceptions, it seems to entail difficulties which Kant, well aware of his predecessors, avoids in his first definition. This is the reason why Kant scholars tend to underemphasize the second definition, thinking it a confusion on Kant's part. The problem with the second definition is that it seems to do away with freedom and rationality altogether, making choice a matter of being moved by one's strongest incentive rather than of endorsing a motive by freely incorporating it into one's maxim, regardless of its strength. On this picture of choice, competing incentives "battle it out" by exercising contrary psychic forces on the will, and the strongest one wins. Rather than acting on freely adopted principles, the agent

becomes the passive locus of psychic battles. In order to "act" in a morally worthy way, on this view, one does not simply have and endorse the motive of duty; it must also be one's strongest motive, winning the battle against contrary incentives. This view has become known as the "battle citation model" of moral worth.<sup>33</sup> A consequence of this view is that one can have a good will only if one has a strong will.<sup>34</sup> This makes virtue unavailable to those with a weak will, and so goes against the basic democratic intent of Kant's ethics.

There is, however, another way to interpret the definition of virtue as moral strength of will which not only makes it compatible with Kant's attribution of principle-guided freedom of choice to us but also explains how the cultivation of our emotions can be a measure of virtue itself--albeit only a subjective one, not to be confused with the objective condition of morality itself, inherent in our true, but hidden, disposition (DV:397). When we cultivate morally favorable dispositions and weaken our dispositions to vice, we indicate that we have adopted

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<sup>33</sup>Richard G. Henson coins this term in "What Kant Might Have Said: Moral Worth and the Overdetermination of Dutiful Action," Philosophical Review 88 (1979), pp.365-82, and attributes a "battle citation view of choice" to the Kant of the Groundwork. For a discussion of this view and its problems, see Henry Allison, Kant's Theory of Freedom, pp.114-27.

<sup>34</sup>For a good explanation of why the good will cannot be equivalent to a strong will, see Jay Wallace, "Kant On Moral Worth and Moral Luck" (unpublished).

the basic intention to cultivate morality in ourselves.<sup>33</sup> Our success at that activity is measured by the severity and magnitude of the vices we are able to overcome, and success at that activity is virtue, as strength of will.

Kant's account of virtue as strength of will is compatible with his attribution of principle-guided freedom of choice to us because the cultivation of the emotions is itself a freely chosen task, reflected in the maxim: "I intend to use all means within my power as a finite rational being to cultivate a virtuous disposition." Acting on cultivated dispositions, Kant stresses, can never become a matter of habit, for then we would lose the freedom in the adoption of obligatory ends which is essential to morality (DV:409). But we can facilitate our free choice of such ends by removing obstacles to such choices and cultivating dispositions which facilitate them. We always face competing incentives--this is a fact about our nature as finite rational beings (DV:397)--and we are always able to choose freely among them by incorporating them into various maxims. But we can make it easier to adopt the right maxims by changing our inclinations, and that process is itself

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<sup>33</sup>See Mary Gregor's introduction to her translation of The Metaphysics of Morals, p.25, for a discussion of how this process of cultivation is also commanded by the specific duties in The Doctrine of Virtue.

"the work of freedom."<sup>36</sup> This, of course, does not entail that the strongest incentive will be the one we adopt. We will only have made it more likely that we will act on the proper incentive by weakening those incentives which stand opposed to it.

It is in this sense--by reference to a long-term process and not a single moment of choice--that virtue is measured by the magnitude of obstacles it can overcome: a virtuous choice is the product not only of the momentary flash of a noumenal will (as Iris Murdoch would have it), but also of a long process of clearing our subjective disposition of obstacles which stand in the way of such a choice.<sup>37</sup> Consider Kant's solution to the problem of how a man can be under duty to make himself good when he is

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<sup>36</sup>See Mary Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, pp.197-8 for a discussion of how cultivating emotions can be "the work of freedom."

<sup>37</sup>I therefore consider it oversimplified to argue, as Barbara Herman does in "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty", The Practice of Moral Judgment, p.\*\*\* that struggle with recalcitrant inclination is no special mark of virtue. It is true that the moral worth of any particular action is not affected by the presence or absence of recalcitrant inclinations. But that does not entail that the long-term process of weakening recalcitrant inclinations does not have moral worth. Since Kant thinks we always have recalcitrant inclinations to contend with, due to our finite nature (DV:397), it is always imperative on us to fight them, and this struggle is a mark of virtue. See MM:228, 394, 397, 405; LE, 139-40; R:71 for especially clear statements of this claim. For a helpful discussion of Kant's conception of virtue as the process of overcoming recalcitrant dispositions, see Christine Korsgaard, "Morality as Freedom," in Kant's Practical Philosophy Reconsidered, 1989), pp.23-48, esp. pp.44-5.

"corrupt in the very ground of his maxims" and will, moreover, always have inclinations which oppose the law:

But if a man is corrupt in the very ground of his maxims, how can he possibly bring about this revolution by his own powers and by himself become a good man? Yet duty bids us do this, and duty demands nothing of us which we cannot do. There is no reconciliation possible here except by saying that man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of, a revolution in his cast of mind, but only of a gradual reform in his sensuous nature (which places obstacles in the way of the former). That is, if a man reverses, by a single unchangeable decision, that highest ground of his maxims whereby he was an evil man (and thus puts on a new man), he is, so far as his principle and cast of mind are concerned, a subject susceptible of goodness, but only in continuous labor and growth is he a good man (R:43, emphases mine).

What becomes clear here is that although good character may be indicated by the presence of the firm resolution to make oneself good (an intention signalled by a revolution in one's cast of mind), the actual realization of this intention--that is, the process of actually becoming good--can only consist in a gradual reform of one's sensuous character. The "gradual" and "absolute" conceptions of

moral improvement are thus not really at odds; they only show the difference between intention and action.

Striving for moral perfection, then, involves a gradual reform of our sensuous character. Since cultivating and acting on certain emotions is itself constitutive of a virtuous frame of mind, albeit from a subjective point of view--that is, from our point of view as finite rational agents--striving to be virtuous is equivalent, from that point of view, to making it easier, more probable, that we act in morally worthy ways. So if we commit ourselves to making ourselves more sensitive to the call of duty as it presents itself in particular situations, then we have adopted the basic intention to be virtuous. And we do this precisely by resolving to battle our dispositions to vices and strengthen our dispositions to virtue. Far from entailing a "battle citation model of moral worth" (a picture of choice in which the strongest incentive always wins), Kant's conception of virtue as strength of will therefore presupposes the freedom of choice characteristic of his received view of agency.<sup>3\*</sup>

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<sup>3\*</sup>Because virtue always presupposes the existence of obstacles to be overcome (whether past or present), moral worth or merit will always be proportional to the magnitude of obstacles that have been overcome (see esp. MM:227-8). I thus disagree with Thomas Hill Jr.'s claim that virtue must be distinguished from merit because only the former presupposes a struggle against recalcitrant inclinations (see Hill, Dignity and Practical Reason, p.168). I also disagree with Barbara Herman's conception of moral worth for the same reason (see footnote 32), even though Herman is right to point out that one can display a good will without performing meritorious acts--namely, by forming



Kant's two definitions of virtue are therefore compatible. The difference between them is that the first captures the objective condition of morality, while the second describes morality as it manifests itself in the finite subject. That Kant recognizes the difference, but sees the two conceptions of virtue as complementary, is clear in the following passage:

It is also correct to say that man is under obligation to [acquire] virtue (as moral strength). For while the capacity (facultas) to overcome all opposing sensible impulses can and must simply be presupposed in man on account of his freedom, yet this capacity as strength (robur) is something he must acquire; and the way to acquire it is to enhance the moral incentive (the thought of the law), both by contemplating the dignity of the pure law in us (contemplatione) and by practicing virtue (executio) (DV:397).

To acquire virtue as strength of will, it is necessary both to reflect on the moral law and what it entails about human beings (that they are ends in themselves and therefore possess dignity) and to cultivate those emotions favorable to a moral frame of mind--both through outer (if only legal) action and through the inner adoption of attitudes which help bring about those emotions. For instance, to feel

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virtuous intentions (see Herman, "Integrity and Impartiality," p.239)--although here, too, the intention must be formed from a sense of duty.

proper humility before the moral law, we must not see ourselves as possessing more worth than others, since everyone has the capacity for morality; to feel love, we must refrain from judging people and must take an interest in their ends, and so forth. Since the adoption of such attitudes--the thinking of such thoughts--is freely chosen (an inner act of the mind; see DV:393), and such acts of mind can help bring about morally appropriate emotions, it is always within our power to affect how we feel. We can thus cultivate feelings either through thought or through external action.

This view of the emotions explains why Kant, only one page after having asserted that all feeling belongs to "the order of nature" (DV:377), can also claim that "pleasure that must be preceded by the law in order to be felt is in the moral order" (DV:378). Emotions which are cultivated because they help shape a moral frame of mind are products of moral intending--that is, intending according to the moral law--and so, become part of the moral order. The moral order also includes emotions which are contrary to a moral frame of mind, but which have nevertheless been cultivated with that awareness (they belong, of course, to an evil disposition). The moral order, in short, includes everything that is open to moral evaluation; that is, all actions which are undertaken through an awareness--favorable or unfavorable--of the moral law as well as all feelings and

dispositions which have been cultivated through such an awareness.<sup>39</sup>

The multifarious activity of acquiring virtue as strength of will requires relentless self-scrutiny. For in order to know which inclinations are morally problematic and which are not, one must be perfectly honest with oneself about why one has them, what their significance is, and whether one should change them. This is why Kant makes self-knowledge "the first command of all duties to oneself" (DV:441), and so, indirectly, makes it the first command of all duties, since all duties are duties to oneself in the sense that virtue must spring from an attitude of mind conforming to the dignity of one's humanity.<sup>40</sup> The command, "Know yourself!" means:

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<sup>39</sup>What Kant means by "the moral order" is, of course, ambiguous, since it can mean either a) intentions and actions to realize moral ends which are made from a sense of duty, or b) those acts and products of acts--e.g., feelings--which do help realize moral ends but which are not necessarily willed from duty, as well as actions contrary to the moral law which are undertaken with that awareness. I think (b) is most plausible, not only because it includes all actions open to moral evaluation, but also because of Kant's claim that pleasure, which itself does not carry any moral worth, belongs to the moral order (DV:378). "The moral order" is thus roughly equivalent to what Kant meant by "the intelligible world" in the Groundwork: an interpretation of the sensible world according to moral laws.

<sup>40</sup>Mary Gregor gives the following examples to illustrate how Kant conceives of all duties as indirectly duties to ourselves: "a duty of forgiving someone who has injured us is indirectly a duty to ourselves of not degrading our soul with hatred, and our duty to benevolence is indirectly a duty to ourselves of making ourselves the source of others' happiness" (Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, p.128, fn.1).

Know your heart--whether it is good or evil, whether the source of your actions is pure or impure, and what can be imputed to you as belonging originally to the substance of man or as derived (acquired or developed) and belonging to your moral condition. (DV:441)

It is significant that Kant here leaves room for actions based on inclinations which are morally irrelevant. These belong to "the substance of man," i.e., to our natural constitution, and include such matters as whether we prefer fish to beef, blondes to brunettes, jogging to swimming, and so forth. These inclinations are irrelevant to evaluating one's moral standing; hence, we should not see it as a matter of duty to change them. Indeed, if we did include them in the moral order, we would commit the vice of "micrology," a "concern with petty details...which, were it admitted into the doctrine of virtue, would turn the government of virtue into tyranny" (DV:409). Since there are two possible sources of inclinations--nature and freedom--one must know whether a given inclination belongs to one's natural state or to one's moral condition.<sup>41</sup> Only in the latter case does the inclination reflect one's moral standing, since only then does it belong to "the moral

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<sup>41</sup>It is important to note that in the process of evaluating those dispositions which belong to one's "moral condition," one must not only attend to one's present actions and motives, but also to one's past record. For inclinations are desires which require experience with the object of desire, and so, presuppose the past (see R:24, note). Inclinations thus include settled character traits.

order," which alone is open to moral evaluation. Still, both sorts of inclinations can be cultivated through free choice (one can learn to like things one did not like in the past). The cultivation of inclinations belonging to our natural condition, though, is morally irrelevant.

We can now summarize the systematic import of feeling in the virtuous life, as Kant conceives of it. Virtue as strength of will, we saw, is bound up with the call to self-knowledge implicit in Kant's doctrine of the inscrutability of motives--a call to know ourselves as deeply as possible given our finite rational nature. Self-knowledge is important not because we are interested in knowing whether we are virtuous, but because it puts us on the road to virtue. Since we always have inclinations which are contrary to moral ends, but are also always aware of ourselves as subject to a law of duty (A:185) and so never sanction an evil inclination of which we are aware (A:159), knowledge of the existence of morally harmful inclinations puts us on the road to self-improvement. Cultivating those emotions favorable to the adoption of moral ends is a central aim of self-improvement because it marks the basic intention to strive for a virtuous disposition; and striving for such a disposition is the highest end we can have as human beings, since our real motives are inscrutable to us. We are now in a position to turn to the specific ways in

which the cultivation of feeling helps shape a virtuous disposition.

#### Part IV: The Specific Roles of Feeling in the Moral Life

What follows is a sketch of the main roles which feeling can play in the moral life. In subsequent chapters, the sketch will be filled out by a more detailed discussion of each type of feeling and its role in the moral life.

I have identified three basic types of feelings, distinguished by the role they play in the moral life as Kant conceives of it:

1. Duty-feelings: feelings which we need in order to recognize duty at all;
2. Dignity-feelings: feelings which help us shape a conception of ourselves which is in harmony with the dignity of our humanity (primarily associated with our duties toward ourselves);
3. Helping feelings: feelings which help us carry out our duties toward others by shaping loving and respectful attitudes toward them, including feelings which make virtue and its outward manifestations aesthetically appealing.

As we will see, there is often an overlap between these categories, since feelings found in one category can also have functions defined by another category. While I discuss

each type of feeling in detail in following chapters, I give here a brief sketch of each, showing how it can be a matter of duty to cultivate feelings of that type. It is important to remember that each argument for a duty to cultivate feeling sets out from a conception of ourselves as finite rational beings--beings who, unlike God, do not spontaneously act on the moral law because of internal obstacles which we need to overcome.

#### I. Duty-feelings

At DV:399-403, Kant specifies four duty-feelings:

- a) Moral feeling
- b) Conscience
- c) Love of man
- d) Self-respect.

Their common feature, says Kant, is that "they lie at the basis of morality, as subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty, not as objective conditions of morality" (DV:399). To do our duty from duty is the objective condition of morality. These subjective predispositions do not constitute that condition, but are presupposed by it, since we need them in order to recognize and be responsive to duty, and so, to act morally at all. As we will see, some form of at least one of these feelings is involved in the other categories of feeling enumerated above. The duty-feelings cover all the basic character

traits of the virtuous individual, but these qualities receive further specification in the categories which follow.

In particular, I want to show that since even though the duty-feelings carry certain similarities to select natural feelings (love of man is similar, though not identical to, natural sympathy), the morally mature agent is able to judge whether a given feeling carries the husk of moral thinking around it or not (reflected in our attitude toward its objects). She can therefore also determine whether the motive of duty is present in or along with the feeling (present in it if the feeling is one of the moral feelings; along with it if the feeling is a morally beneficial natural feeling). The morally mature individual is therefore able to express her sense of duty in a more heartfelt way than the moral novice is able to.

The fact that some form of at least one of the duty-feelings is involved in each of the subsequent categories of morally beneficial feelings has some interesting results. The notable one is that, since duty-feelings affect us simply in virtue of our awareness of the moral law, it is within the power of each individual, regardless of dispositional quirks or warmth vs. coldness of personality, to acquire the qualities which characterize virtue in its most full-blooded sense. Kant says that "every man has [duty-feelings], and it is by virtue of them that he can be



put under obligation" (DV:399). If this is true, then each of us can use our duty-feelings as a basis for cultivating the more specific feelings defined in subsequent categories. And, vice versa, we can refine our natural feelings in such a way that they make the motive of duty itself more heartfelt.

Since duty-feelings, however, weakly felt, are accessible to each individual in virtue of her awareness of the moral law, Kant is immune to the common charge that he is forced to pay insufficient attention to emotions as a result of his twin claims that a) virtue must be accessible to each individual, and b) since we vary in our emotional make-up, emotion cannot be the basis of virtue. Critics (among them, Bernard Williams, whose criticisms of Kant on the emotions--including the one just mentioned--I will consider in detail in Chapter 5) have inferred from these two claims that no state of the emotions--except perhaps the absence of emotion altogether--can be required in a virtuous Kantian character. But if moral action presupposes feelings (viz the aforementioned "duty-feelings") and if, moreover, it is possible for us to use these universally possessed predispositions to cultivate morally beneficial natural feelings (feelings which help us fulfill our duties but which, unlike the four "duty-feelings," are not grounded in a grasp of the moral law), then Kant can clearly hold both

that virtue is accessible to every individual and that at least some emotions play a crucial role in the moral life.

Since each of the four duty-feelings is involved in the other three categories of feeling, I will not discuss them separately, but rather in conjunction with the feelings of the other three categories. Moral feeling or reverence for the moral law, however, is an exception since it is basic to all categories: it is the ultimate precondition for recognizing and being responsive to the concept of duty. Accordingly, I begin by giving a brief characterization of moral feeling, to be filled out in Chapter 3.

What Kant in the Doctrine of Virtue calls "moral feeling" (DV:399-400), he elsewhere (in other works and at DV:387 and 467-8) calls "respect" or "reverence" (Achtung) for the moral law: the feeling of constraint which we experience when we think of the moral law and the duties it imposes on us. This feeling of constraint is accompanied by an interest in acting on the moral law, since the law stems from our own rational nature, and so is elevating at the same time as it is constraining.

Even though respect has a dual nature, it is on the whole a positive attitude toward the moral law, a view of it as something worth following. Accordingly, when we undertake a course of action which is opposed to the moral law, we feel displeasure; and when our actions are consistent with the law, we feel pleasure (DV:399). In the

Doctrine of Virtue, Kant takes the feeling of pleasure or displeasure which accompanies our actions to be part of the moral feeling, which also includes respect for the law. In the Critique of Practical Reason, however, he is careful to distinguish the feeling of pleasure or displeasure which follows our actions--which he defines as moral feeling--from the moral motive of respect for the law on the grounds that pleasure and pain are only effects of our actions and cannot be seen as motives (Cprrr:116-17). I shall take this distinction to be implicit in the Doctrine of Virtue.

While each of us feels respect for the law, we still have a duty to strengthen that feeling "through wonder at its inscrutable source," that is, by thinking about how the moral law differs from merely sensuous incentives and how that incentive "is induced most intensely in its purity by a merely rational representation" (DV:400). Reflecting on the fact that we can be motivated by something which has a purely rational origin makes the moral law a stronger incentive.

### ii. Dignity-feelings

The central feeling in this category is self-respect. It is closely connected to moral feeling in that its object is the moral law; the difference is that self-respect is directed at the self as the subject of the moral law, while moral feeling is directed at the moral law and only

indirectly at the self (cf. LE:126). The feeling of self-respect is akin to pride. Its main function is to remind us of our dignity as subjects of the moral law, a fact about us which imposes certain duties on how we should think about ourselves and how we should comport ourselves--namely, as subjects worthy of the humanity within us and of its highest end, morality. Self-respect, Kant says, "is the basis for certain duties, that is, of certain actions that are consistent with [man's] duty to himself" (DV:403, cf. LE:121)). Self-respect, then, is primarily connected with duties to oneself. It form the basis both of duties to act in certain ways and of duties to combat feelings opposed to the dignity of our humanity.

One feeling which self-respect is meant to counteract is false humility, i.e., servility. The only appropriate object of humility is the moral law itself (DV:436); any humility toward other men should be based only on the fact that they, too, are legislators of the moral law. Any other form of humility--"bowing and scraping" before men (DV:437), revering or flattering them--is false humility, since it "degrades one's personality" (DV:435-6; 467-8). It is even contrary to our duty towards other men because it displays "a [kind of] ambition" reflected in the belief that through such behavior, one will acquire a greater worth than they have (DV:436). To cultivate self-respect, it is necessary not only to reflect on oneself as subject of the moral law

and to hold certain attitudes toward oneself, but also to act in ways that are appropriate to our elevated status. For in doing so, we counteract the vice of servility and thereby strengthen our self-respect. This is an especially clear instance of how certain actions can bring about morally beneficial feelings.

From the foregoing, it is clear that self-respect makes us act in ways which underscore our role as legislators of duty, and so, helps us fulfill our duties in a proud rather than dejected or grudging way. But how does self-respect serve as a precondition for recognizing the concept of duty in the first place? In including self-respect among duty-feelings, Kant implies it must have such a role. I think the feature of duty to which self-respect makes us sensitive is the fact that every duty is indirectly a duty toward oneself (see LE:121, 223). As Mary Gregor points out, "a duty of forgiving someone who has injured us is indirectly a duty to ourselves of not degrading our soul with hatred, and our duty to benevolence is indirectly a duty to ourselves of making ourselves the source of others' happiness."<sup>42</sup> All virtuous deeds must spring from a proud attitude--a state of mind conforming to the dignity of our humanity. This attitude is of course first adopted through thought and not through feeling, but it causes us to have a stronger feeling of self-respect. Thoughts or attitudes are thus included

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<sup>42</sup>See Gregor, The Laws of Freedom, p.128, fn.1.

among the actions (in this case, acts of mind) which help cultivate morally beneficial feelings and, ultimately, a virtuous character.

I have already observed that the pride appropriate to our dignity is limited only by humility before the moral law. This humility is bound up with another dignity-feeling relevant to our duties to ourselves, namely, conscience. Kant defines conscience as "consciousness of an internal court in man ('before which his thoughts accuse or excuse one another')" (DV:438). Conscience is the power of judgment applied to one's own actions, for which reason then gives the verdict "guilty" or "innocent." This activity is something we cannot escape; we can only bring ourselves (in conditions of extreme depravity) no longer to heed it (DV:438). Since conscience is inescapable, it inspires awe in us:

Every man has a conscience and finds himself observed, threatened, and, in general, kept in awe (respect coupled with fear) by an internal judge; and this authority watching over the law in him is not something that he himself (voluntarily) makes, but something incorporated into his being. It follows him like a shadow when he plans to escape. (DV:438)

Conscience is thus not strictly a feeling. It is rather an activity of judgment bound up with the feeling of awe (fear coupled with respect). The judgments of conscience (or

rather, of reason) are followed by either relief or pain, depending on whether the verdict was "innocent" or "guilty" (DV:440). Since conscience is something we cannot escape but can only dull our senses to, we do not have a duty to acquire a conscience; we only have a duty to cultivate it. We do this by heeding its verdicts, by sharpening our attentiveness to its voice, and by enlightening our understanding about what is and what is not our duty, which is the same as using "every means to obtain a hearing for [the voice of conscience]" (DV:401, my insert).

Kant does not explain why heeding one's conscience is a duty to oneself (though he classifies it as such a duty at DV:437), but I think it is plausible to see this duty--characterized as a duty to "judge" oneself (DV:438)--as bound up with the duty to know oneself (which Kant at DV:441 calls the "first command of all duties to oneself"). For conscience judges not only the legality of our actions, but also of their morality. We have a bad conscience if someone interprets our act as beneficent when in fact it was done from a selfish motive. Similarly, if we plan to act in a certain way, conscience judges the moral worth of the action even before we have undertaken it (DV:438). This gives us important information regarding our long-standing motivations. Heeding our conscience is thus an important aspect of self-knowledge.

How, finally, does conscience help us recognize and be responsive to duty? It helps us recognize duty by holding before its court of justice each action we contemplate undertaking (DV:438). This makes us aware of the implications of acting contrary to duty, and so, reminds us of the severity of its commands and the necessity with which duty binds us. Conscience thus reminds us of the necessity of the moral law--of the fact that we cannot make ourselves an exception to it. Conscience helps us respond to duty because we know that we cannot escape the verdict of conscience. This is not a motive of fear; it is rather an awareness of the inevitability of practical reason within us. The awareness that practical reason will judge our actions whatever we may do provides a powerful incentive to conform to the commands of the moral law.

### iii. Helping Feelings

These feelings are connected primarily with our duties toward others. The central feeling here is the love of mankind. While Kant says that it cannot be a duty to have this feeling, since love cannot be felt out of the constraint inherent in the thought of duty, it is still a duty to cultivate it by practicing beneficence (DV:401-2).<sup>43</sup> Kant's assumption here is that by doing good to

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<sup>43</sup>Kant's claim that beneficence produces a feeling of love (DV:402) can of course be interpreted not as a claim about our duties but as a claim about the effect of beneficence. That is,



others, we will come to love them (DV:402, 457). This is, of course, a tenuous assumption. But it becomes more plausible if we think of a concrete situation in which we help someone. Our interaction with the person gives us familiarity with her, and her sense of decency (assuming she has any!) will prompt her to show gratitude toward us. The experience will most likely be amiable, and so, will inspire in us an affection for her. This at least seems to be Kant's idea, and I intend to make it plausible in Chapter 4, the chapter devoted to helping feelings.

While the duty of beneficence gives us a latitude in deciding whom to help and when--the most likely recipients of our beneficence being, of course, our nearest and dearest (DV:452)--it is conjoined with the duty to friendship (a relationship characterized by mutual love and respect; DV:469), which imposes on us the ultimate aim of becoming a "friend of man," that is, someone who takes an active interest in the well-being not only of those who are near and dear, but also of those who are not, and does so with respect and not with the unwarranted pride of a benefactor (DV:472-3). Engaging in friendships also helps break down the reserve we feel toward those we do not know. Love

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Kant might not be making it a duty to cultivate love, but only to practice beneficence. However, since he classifies love of man among the subjective predispositions to duty itself and, in his discussion of the other subjective predispositions, clearly makes it a duty to cultivate them (see DV:399-401), I think he also sees it as incumbent on us to cultivate love of man.

toward particular individuals is thus meant to serve as a foundation for a more generalized love of mankind, mediated by the ease which particular friendships give us in opening up to those whom we do not know (LE:206-7).

In what sense is love of mankind a subjective precondition for recognizing and responding to duty? This is difficult to establish, since love can be cultivated only by recognizing duty in the first place--that is, by practicing beneficence. Kant gives no explanation for why he includes love of man among the duty-feelings. It is plausible to assume, however, that the love of man, if not a necessary requirement for our recognition of duty, will render the universality-requirement of the moral law more concrete to us. If we take an active interest in the well-being of others, we are better able to see the law not just as an abstract requirement of reason, but as a principle urging us to be concerned with the well-being and rights of individuals in specific situations. I submit, then, that the love of man helps us recognize duty by making its requirements more concrete to us.

The love of man also helps us respond more readily to the requirements of duty because as finite beings, we are morally fallible, and so, will not always act on the moral law simply because it is our duty to do so. Cultivating love of man is a way of spurring us along the right course of action even when duty is not a sufficient motive. This

is why Kant says that sympathy is "one of the impulses that nature has implanted in us to do what the representation of duty alone could not accomplish" (DV:457). Given our finite rational nature, it is incumbent on us to use whatever means available to fulfill our obligatory ends. If duty cannot motivate us, we must use our natural sympathy to carry out the demands of duty. For action is, after all, the ultimate end of all duties--the end for the sake of which we cultivate all the morally appropriate dispositions and feelings (see DV:441; LE, 143, 200).<sup>44</sup>

There is also a class of feelings directed primarily at the aesthetic appeal of virtue. Love is the central feeling here. In the Critique of Judgment, Kant draws a close connection between the sense of beauty and the feeling of love (CJ:267). This connection is exploited for moral ends in the Doctrine of Virtue. Virtuous behavior has aesthetically appealing outward manifestations which make us take an interest in virtue, if not for its own sake, then at least for its aesthetic appeal (DV:473-4). Similarly, love of man is a "moral ornament" to the world, required to "represent the world as a beautiful moral whole in its complete perfection" (DV, 458). By helping us imagine the

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<sup>44</sup>Kant's claim that action is the ultimate goal of morality is somewhat difficult to reconcile with his claim that the duties of the Doctrine of Virtue prescribe primarily the cultivation of the inner disposition--the good will--required for morality (DV:392-3). In subsequent chapters, I hope to show how the cultivation of a moral disposition relates to the fulfillment of duty through action.

world as it should be, as a "beautiful moral whole," the love of man gives us a concrete representation of the ultimate aim of reason. This is an especially clear instance of reason enlisting certain emotions for the fulfillment of its ends, given that human reason exists in beings who are imperfectly rational.

It may be objected that acting out of love of man is not morally required, since all that morality requires is striving to act out of sense of duty. But we have seen that we are required, as finite beings, to cultivate all the motives which help us realize the two obligatory ends. The aesthetic appeal of love of man gives us yet another incentive to cultivate it. An action will be more graceful if we do it not just out of duty, but also out of inclination--that is, if our desires are in harmony with the requirements of reason. Actions possessing this sort of harmony have no greater moral worth than actions performed from duty but against inclination (G:397-9). Nevertheless, they have an aesthetic value because they lend harmony and grace to the otherwise stern life of duty. Those emotions which help us fulfill moral ends can therefore be seen as fulfilling an aesthetic desideratum of harmony and balance.

## Conclusion

I hope that I have, by now, made clear the systematic import of feeling in the moral life, for Kant. We have a duty to cultivate feelings because we are not holy wills. We will always have inclinations which oppose morality; hence we are under obligation to use every means within our power to shape within ourselves a morally good disposition. Even if we should succeed in fulfilling our duties from the motive of duties and so attain, from an objective point of view, a state of moral perfection, we could never know, from our own subjective standpoint, that we had attained such a state because our motives are inscrutable to us. Because we can never assume that we have attained a morally perfect state and because of the ever-present possibility of temptation, we are obliged to continue the process of cultivating morally beneficial emotions throughout our moral lives. In subsequent chapters, I hope to explore in greater detail how cultivating and acting on morally beneficial emotions can actually be constitutive of a virtuous frame of mind in its most full-blooded sense.

### Chapter 3:

#### The Feeling of Respect for the Moral Law

For Kant, the notion of moral obligation poses a special problem. Previous thinkers had conceived of obligation in essentially motivational terms. When they asked how moral standards obligate us, they were asking how they could motivate us to act on them. Because they characterized obligations in terms of antecedent desires--either self-directed (fear, self-love) or other-directed (sociability, benevolence, love of God)--these thinkers had no problem explaining how we come to act on an obligation: obligations are conditioned by natural feelings or desires and so follow upon the very motive for acting on them.

Kant breaks with this tradition. He argues that, since moral obligations bind us regardless of what we happen to desire, the concept of moral obligation cannot be defined in terms of antecedent desires; rather, it must be defined in terms of a categorical imperative which commands unconditionally. In defining moral obligation this way, Kant severs the concept of obligation from the concept of sensuous motivation, for it is definitive of the categorical imperative that it binds us regardless of what we happen to desire.

Having made this move, Kant faces a problem. How is it possible for moral obligations to motivate us? How can we be moved to act on an unconditional command? Kant has to be able to answer this question if pure reason is to be able, without the help of empirical incentives, to determine the will--that is, if pure reason is to be practical. Kant's solution to the problem is the following. He holds that pure reason is indeed practical because it generates its own special motive, namely, a feeling of respect for the moral law. Moral obligations, then, are capable of motivating us through the feeling of respect which they evoke in us.

Kant's solution to the problem of moral motivation is by no means unambiguous, as is evidenced by the many divergent interpretations of how the moral law comes to motivate us. Several commentators reject any involvement of respect in moral motivation. They see us as being motivated by pure reason and conceive of respect as the (pathological) effect of being so motivated.<sup>1</sup> Others accept respect as the motive for acting on the moral law, but disagree about its nature: some see it as a process of glorying in the thought of our intelligible nature,<sup>2</sup> while others portray

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Guyer is a representative of this view (see Chapter 10, Kant and the Experience of Freedom). There are also strands of this view in Andrews Reath's account of the "sensible" side of respect (see "Kant's Theory of Moral Sensibility: Respect for the Moral Law and the Influence of Inclination," esp. pp.289-90).

<sup>2</sup>A representative of this view is A. Murray MacBeath, "Kant on Moral Feeling," Kant-Studien 64 (1973), pp.283-314.

it as the recognition of the moral law as a sufficient reason to act<sup>3</sup> or as a recognition of the formal consistency in acting on the moral law.<sup>4</sup> This divergence in the present understanding of Kant's views on moral motivation shows that we still need an account of how the moral law produces a motive for acting on it.

My aim in this paper is to put forth a reading of respect which fills this need. I align myself with the group that sees respect as the motive for acting on the moral law, but I disagree with most of their accounts of the nature of respect. These commentators uniformly shy away from the notion that respect, in its motivating capacity, is a full-blooded feeling. They see it instead as a rational insight, deemphasizing its "pathological" side.<sup>5</sup> In a

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<sup>3</sup>Representatives of this view are Andrews Reath, "Kant's Theory of Moral Sensibility: Respect for the Moral Law and the Influence of Inclination," Kant-Studien 80 (1989), pp.284-302; Henry Allison, Kant's Theory of Freedom (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), p.127.

<sup>4</sup>A representative of this view is J. Schneewind, "Autonomy, Obligation, and Virtue," in The Cambridge Companion to Kant, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), p.309-31, esp. pp.326-29.

<sup>5</sup>I am convinced that they do this because they think it will violate Kant's conception of agency to see moral motivation as anything but purely rational. They think that if the moral motive contains any non-rational admixture, we are somehow not free when we act on the moral law. Thus, in spite of his admirable construal of choice--including pathologically affected choice--as the free incorporation of incentives into our maxims (Reath, "Kant's Theory," pp.290-1), Andrews Reath feels compelled to believe that anything but a purely rational construal of the moral motive would violate the model of free choice he just put forth (Reath, "Kant's Theory," p.295). In fact, no incentive can violate the model of free choice, since our freedom of choice is



sense, they are justified in doing so, for if respect is pathological, it seems contingent that it should occur alongside our rational recognition of the moral law; and if respect is contingent, it could not serve as the stable source of motivation that Kant wants it to be. I want to show that this type of worry is unfounded, since respect for the moral law is a genuine feeling (in a sense yet to be defined) which arises necessarily upon reflection on the moral law. Feeling is thus an essential aspect of the "pure" moral motive and thus of the motive of duty itself.

First, a few words on why I align myself with the group of commentators which thinks of respect as the motive to rather than the effect of moral willing--that is, as a consequence of our recognition of the moral law but a presupposition for acting on it.

#### Part I: Why respect precedes rather than follows moral willing

On the face of it, the claim that respect precedes moral willing and must serve as the motive for moral action seems singularly un-Kantian. Kant repeatedly claims that in morally worthy actions, the moral law must determine the will directly and not through an intervening feeling (CP:25, 

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preserved regardless of the nature of our choices.

27, 38, 48, 71)). This is a requirement we would expect from someone who wants to show that pure reason is practical. In order for pure reason to be practical, the moral law--the supreme law of pure reason--must be able to determine the will without the help of empirical incentives, including feelings of various sorts (G:461). But this seems to suggest that the feeling of respect can have no role in moral motivation. Even though Kant describes respect as a feeling known a priori (CP:75, 76, 77, 81), it still remains a feeling. All that is known a priori about respect is that, as the consciousness of the determination of the will by the moral law, it involves the diminution of the influence of sensuous inclination on the will (CP:75, 79, 156). But that takes place on the sensuous plane, and so, seems to suggest that respect is itself sensuous in character. If its presence is needed to move us to act on a law of pure reason, it seems to obliterate Kant's requirement that pure reason must be sufficient of itself to determine the will.\*

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\*Beck notes the apparent inconsistency between claiming that the moral law directly determines the will and that it does so through a feeling of respect. But he does not resolve the inconsistency, for he fails to distinguish subjective from objective determining grounds of the will--as do most other commentators. As a result, he takes the expression "the direct determination of the will by the moral law" to mean the actual choice to adhere to the moral law rather than, as I interpret it, the mere awareness of the moral law as a possible practical principle. See Beck, A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp.222-3, esp. fn.37.

I believe, however, that Kant can consistently maintain that pure reason is sufficient of itself to determine the will and that it does so through the feeling of respect. To see why, we need to consider the sense in which Kant intends respect to be a feeling. If we think that by "feeling" (Gefühl), Kant must mean something pathological, his claim that reason motivates us through a feeling does indeed seem paradoxical. For inclinations are at best in contingent conformity with the moral law, but the moral motive must be present whether or not our inclinations conform to it (G:425; CP:21-6); thus, the moral motive cannot be an inclination (that is why Kant repeatedly stresses that we cannot have a feeling for the moral law as such; see CP:38-9, 75). But if, instead, we think of feeling as a reflective process, which involves pathological elements but is primarily conditioned by a judgment of reason, we get a view of feeling which incorporates both a rational element (the recognition of the moral law as binding on us) and feelings of pleasure and pain. It is in this latter sense, I suggest, that respect is a feeling. Respect can only arise in response to our recognition of the moral law as supremely authoritative for us. It thus qualifies as a unique type of feeling, generated in response to an a priori concept. Because of its a priori origin, respect is sufficiently permanent to motivate us in every situation.

Does our judgment-laden view of respect help resolve the puzzle? It seems it does not. For there still appears to be an inconsistency in claiming both that the moral law directly determines the will and that it does so only by means of the feeling of respect--whether or not respect is a feeling in the latter, judgment-laden sense.<sup>7</sup> To resolve this inconsistency, we need to recognize Kant's distinction between subjective and objective determining grounds of the will. This distinction is present already in the Groundwork, where Kant characterizes the moral will as determined "objectively" by the moral law and "subjectively" by "pure respect for this practical law" (G:400; also 460 and CP:81). What does the distinction amount to?

An objective determining ground of the will is a rational principle. It is objective in the sense that it is informed by reason, though it need not be valid for every rational being. A maxim, for instance, is an objective determining ground of the will which is valid only for me (CP:19). A law, by contrast, is a principle which is valid not only for me, but for all rational beings, whether finite (such as ourselves) or infinite (such as God). It is an objective determining ground of the will which is also objectively valid. Such a principle, e.g., "Never makes false promises," belongs to reason as such: reason need not

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<sup>7</sup>For now, I am flagging the "judgment-laden" view of respect and will return to it in Part IV, where I discuss the structure and character of respect.

venture beyond itself into the realm of pathological desires in order to specify such a principle (CP:20-1). Among objectively valid principles of reason are also hypothetical imperatives, e.g., "If you desire an end, do what is in your power to attain it." Hypothetical imperatives, while objectively valid, are not laws because they require, for their formulation, material from the pathological realm. Because they are based on externally given desires, they do not "determine the will as will," but determine it "only in respect to a desired effect"--an effect whose occurrence is at best contingent because conditioned by a contingent choice or desire (CP:20). In this, they differ from laws, which determine the will "as will," and so, necessarily. (I will explain this sense of necessity in further detail in Part III.) So, within the category of objective determining grounds of the will, we have principles of reason which are either subjectively or objectively valid. Maxims belong to the former category; laws and imperatives to the latter (see G:400n, 422n).

A subjective determining ground of the will is an incentive. Kant defines an incentive as "a subjective determining ground of a will whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform to the objective law" (CP:72; also 32).<sup>a</sup> Such beings--ourselves figuring notoriously

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<sup>a</sup>Beck defines an incentive (Triebfeder) as "the dynamic or conative factor in willing." This conative factor is present only in finite rational beings (Beck, Commentary, pp.216-17.)

among them--have an internal resistance toward acting in a perfectly rational manner, and so must be "impelled" to act on principles of reason. In other words, they need incentives (CP:79).<sup>9</sup> The incentive to act on the hypothetical imperative, "If you want to be rich, call now," for example, is the desire to be rich: given that desire, it is easier for me to follow the principle (though I can always adopt the end regardless of whether I desire it). Similarly, we have an internal resistance to the moral law; thus, we need a moral incentive to motivate us. God, who acts on the moral law by nature, needs no incentive and so does not feel respect (CP:74, 76, 79-80, 82). Respect, as the moral incentive, thus applies only to finite rational beings such as ourselves (CP:79). To summarize, a subjective determining ground of the will is a motive or feeling, while an objective determining ground of the will is a rational principle.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Unlike formalist commentators, I take Kant's use of the term "impelled" (angetrieben) quite seriously--not in the sense of implying physical determinism, which of course it does not, but in the sense of signifying the need to have a feeling serve as the motive to morality. Only a feeling is able to match the promise of pleasure implicit in the claims of the inclinations. It is just this promise which serves as an obstacle to morality; hence, we need to be "impelled" toward morality and away from the claims of the inclinations by a contrary incentive.

<sup>10</sup>It is because Andrews Reath fails to see that incentives are not principles but rather feelings that he has such trouble explaining Kant's claim that "no incentives can be attributed to the divine will" (CP:72). If he were to construe subjective determining grounds of the will as feelings rather than reasons capable of being objectively valid, he would see that they do not apply to a divine will (see Reath, "Kant's Theory," p.286, fn.6).

Kant does not always explicitly distinguish between subjective and objective determining grounds of the will, but once we recognize the distinction, the apparent inconsistency noted above falls away. For while the moral law must directly determine the will objectively, it does not do so subjectively. Only through respect, as the subjective determining ground of the will, can the moral law become an incentive for us. The moral law "furnishes the objective grounds" for respect, but respect is "the subjective effect that the law exercises upon the will," and it is this effect which constitutes the moral interest and so furnishes the moral motive (G:460). Thus, while Kant says that "the moral law determines the will directly and objectively in the judgment of reason" (CP:78, emphasis mine), he can also claim, on the next page, that the feeling of respect is "a subjective ground of activity, as an incentive for obedience to the law" (CP:79). It is possible to act objectively according to the moral law but not subjectively. This happens when judge that the moral law is the right principle to act on and conform our actions to its requirements, but act from a non-moral motive (Kant calls this "legality": CP:81, 152). In order to have a moral disposition, we need not only to judge that the moral law is the right principle to act on (an objective judgment), but also to act from respect for the law (a subjective feeling).

The distinction between subjective and objective determining grounds of the will clarifies an otherwise puzzling sentence in a footnote in the Groundwork, where Kant says that "[t]he immediate determination of the will by the law, and the consciousness thereof, is called respect" (G:401n). The sentence is puzzling because it makes it appear as though "respect" is a mere label for the direct and purely rational choice to act on the moral law. This would make respect, as a feeling which precedes the choice to act on the moral law, motivationally idle, since it seems to suggest that we can be moved to act solely on the basis of pure reason. What Kant means to say, however, is that respect is the way in which the sheer consciousness of the moral law affects the feeling subject. Thus, the sentence continues, respect is "the effect of the law upon the subject." The thought of the moral law gives rise to a feeling of respect, which can then serve as a subjective determining ground of the choice to act on the moral law. The phrase, "the effect of the law upon the subject" should not, then, be taken to refer to the effect of choosing the moral law as one's principle of action; it should rather be taken to refer to the effect of thinking the moral law as the supreme principle of action, regardless of whether or not one actually ends up obeying the law.<sup>21</sup> Only thus can

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<sup>21</sup>In this, I differ from Paul Guyer, who denies that the feeling of respect plays any role in moral motivation (whether as an incentive to act or as the physical "propulsion" which moves



we explain why Kant claims that even sinners--people who manifestly violate the moral law--feel respect for the law (CP:79-80; see also R:41-2, 44). For it is only if respect precedes acting on the moral law (though follows recognition of it) that is it possible for someone to feel respect for the moral law but still fail to act on it.

Motivational purists, who want moral motivation to be a purely rational process, would object that my reading ignores Kant's explicit claim that respect is "[t]he immediate determination of the will by the law" ("Die unmittelbare Bestimmung des Willens durchs Gesetz"; G:401n). This passage seems to suggest that respect just is a purely rational choice to adhere to the law, and so, that we do need not to invoke any mysterious feeling to motivate us. On my reading, however, respect is not the immediate determination of the will by the law, but is rather the consciousness of that determination. It is a feeling arising from our recognition that the law alone is capable of objectively determinining the will.

It is important to note that "the determination of the will by the law" does not signify an actual choice to adhere

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us). Guyer maintains that adopting the moral law as our incentive is a purely rational decision which nevertheless has certain effects on our emotional set, the feeling of respect being the most notable one (book manuscript, pp.486-9). He goes on to argue that the decision to act on the moral law can have effects on one's entire character, not just on one's capacity to feel respect (pp.493-8). I agree with the latter claim, but see it as compatible with taking respect to be the moral motive.

to the moral law. It only signifies a possibility of choice. The decision to act on a given principle is always a matter of free choice (see R:19). Similarly, the decision to act from a given motive is a matter of free choice, and is therefore independent on the permanence or even the strength of one's motive (R:19). One can therefore feel respect without adopting it as one's motive: feeling respect does not entail that one will actually act from respect. Our capacity for free choice also affects the relation between our intentions and our actions. Even intending to act from respect--that is, incorporating it into one's maxim--does not entail that one will actually act on that morally worthy maxim. As Kant puts it, "there is a great gap between the maxim and the deed" (R:42; also 43). It is possible, in other words, to adopt respect as one's motive yet fail to act accordingly.

For these reasons, I find Karl Ameriks' reading of respect as a feeling which follows upon the moral choice and is needed to get us to "move to morality" dubious.<sup>12</sup> On Ameriks' reading, respect is a feeling which arises necessarily upon the choice to act on the moral law. He thinks that we have to decide to adopt the moral law as our motive without the help of feeling--this choice must be a

<sup>12</sup>Karl Ameriks, "The Hegelian Critique of Kantian Morality," in New Essays on Kant, eds. Bernard den Ouden and Marcia Moen (New York and Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp.178-212. Quote from p.186, emphasis mine.

"noumenal acceptance of pure duty"--but that we then need the feeling of respect as the "force" (Ameriks' term) which actually propels us to moral action.<sup>13</sup> Ameriks' reading seems confirmed by Kant's reference to respect as a Triebfeder, a "spring" of action (CP:72), but I interpret this term in a different way. On my reading, respect as a Triebfeder does not move us to morality in any physical sense at all; rather, it moves us in the sense of creating an interest in acting on the moral law. (Just how it does so is the topic of Parts III and IV.) Ameriks seems to be suggesting that, in order to act, we need to be "propelled" to motion by some feeling. But this contradicts Kant's theory of free agency, on which we are never propelled to act, by feeling or by anything else. On Kant's view, we act in a certain way because we have chosen so to act. Feeling enters in as the basis for our various choices and not as the "fuel" for implementing them.

My reasons for believing that respect is the motive to moral willing rather than the effect thereof should by now be clear. In Part II, I explain why it is necessary to view

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<sup>13</sup>Ameriks, pp.186-7. Ameriks goes on to argue that respect, as the effect of the moral choice, can then temper other feelings, so as to allow a whole range of feelings to move us to action in this way (p.187). I agree with Ameriks' claim that respect can inform and condition other feelings; indeed, that is part of my claim about the way in which respect is conducive to human flourishing. But I disagree with Ameriks' view of respect as following the choice to adhere to the moral law. On my view, respect precedes the moral choice in the sense of creating an interest in acting on the moral law.

respect as a feeling rather than a purely rational insight. I then go on, in Parts III and IV, to specify the character of that feeling.

#### Part II: Why the moral motive is a feeling

If we are correctly to understand Kant's notion of moral interest, we must see it as bound up with respect for the moral law, where respect is understood as a full-blown feeling, not just a rational insight. This emphasis on feeling seems to go against much of what Kant says both in the Groundwork and in the second Critique about the purely rational character of moral interest. In particular, it seems to contradict his claim that it is "reason's form, viz., the practical law of the universal validity of maxims," and so the idea of reason "in its relation to a pure intelligible world as...a cause determining the will" (G:462) that gives rise to our interest in obeying the moral law. These considerations--of the form of universal law and our membership, as legislators of such law, in an intelligible world--are purely rational; and so, one would think, the moral interest which arises in response to them must itself be purely rational. It thus seems odd to claim that the moral interest is founded on a feeling of respect which arises in response to these purely rational

considerations. That, however, is just what Kant maintains. He claims that respect is a feeling which arises when we reflect on the moral law, and that this feeling serves as an incentive for obeying the moral law. This feeling, in turn, gives rise to a rational interest in obeying the law: respect "produces an interest in obedience to the law, and this we call moral interest" (CP:80; see also G:459-460).

Why does Kant think we need feeling in order to take an interest in the moral law? Why can't the moral interest arise as a direct rational response to contemplating the moral law? The moral interest is itself, after all, purely rational: it is "a pure nonsensuous interest of the practical reason alone" (CP:79). It seems strange, therefore, to claim, as Kant does, that the moral interest can only arise in response to a feeling of respect. How can a purely rational interest be generated out of a feeling of respect, and why is respect needed at all in order to generate that interest? And further, why, if respect is already present as an incentive for obeying the law, do we need, in addition, a rational interest in doing the same? There seems to be a motivational overdetermination here: we have both a feeling-based incentive to obey the law and a rational interest in doing the same. Surely it would suffice if one of them were present.

To appreciate the logic of this seeming redundancy, we need to make an architectonic excursion and remind ourselves

of the standpoint from which Kant proceeds in his discussion of moral interests and incentives in the second Critique. This discussion takes place in Chapter 3, entitled "The Incentives of Pure Practical Reason." The standpoint from which Kant proceeds in this discussion is the standpoint not of pure practical reason, but of the finite rational subject. We are not concerned here with laying out the principles proper to a rational will; we are concerned with how a being who does not necessarily act on these principles comes to be motivated by them. (Recall that God, who necessarily acts on the moral law, needs neither interests nor incentives to move him to act morally; these concepts simply do not apply to him; see CP:79.) Laying out the principles and workings of a rational will was indeed the concern of Chapter 1 of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason, and this could be done from the standpoint of pure practical reason (though human finitude had at times to be taken into account, as in the inclusion of imperatives among the principles of reason; see CP:20). The topic of Chapter 3, however, cannot be addressed from a purely rational standpoint. The task of this chapter is to show how the sensuously affected subject comes to be moved by the purely rational principles laid out in Chapter 1--to show, in other words, how the principles of reason apply "to the subject and its sensuous faculty" (CP:16, emphasis mine). Chapter 3, then, deals with reason's impact on feeling, where

feeling is construed as essentially motivating, as "a subjective ground of desire" (CP:90). The discussion thus demands a shift from the standpoint of pure practical reason to that of the sensuously affected yet rational subject.

It is this shift in standpoints which explains the apparent redundancy. Kant has introduced another dimension--the sensuous--into his discussion, but he has not removed the rational dimension. Whatever will fill the place of the moral motive must, from this point of view, contain elements of both reason and sensibility. Respect, that which fills this place, contains just these elements (I will describe these in detail shortly, but see CP:79-80). The solution to the apparent redundancy (respect as "sensuous" incentive as opposed to rational interest) is thus to realize that respect is both a "sensuous" incentive and a rational interest. It is a rational interest in so far as the finite subject looks to its rational side; it is an incentive in so far as the subject looks to its finite side. The dual nature of respect explains Kant's claim that an interest "indicates an incentive of the will so far as it is presented by reason" (CP:79, emphasis mine): the rational incentive is respect, as viewed from the point of view of reason. But this rational interest remains part of a feeling, i.e., a subjective ground of determining the will, and so, Kant can say that "the capacity for taking...an interest in the moral law (or of having respect for the

moral law itself) is really moral feeling" (CP:80). Our capacity to take an interest in the moral law is rational, but Kant identifies this capacity with respect and calls it a moral feeling because it is bound up with a subjective and irreducibly aesthetic outlook (I say "aesthetic" rather than "sensuous" because, as we will see in Part IV, the "sensuous" side of respect is really not pathological; it is more akin to an aesthetic attitude.) Respect, then, is both the moral incentive and the moral interest. The apparent redundancy disappears.

Another architectonic puzzle remains. What does Kant's discussion of moral incentives in Chapter 3 add to his "Fact of Reason" discussion in Chapter 1? In Chapter 1, Kant observes that we recognize the moral law as supremely authoritative and immediately directive for us (an insight which he terms "The Fact of Reason"; see CP:31<sup>14</sup>). Because the moral law determines the will objectively in respect of its form alone, the will which recognizes it as binding must do so independently of any empirical object of desire. Such a will is "wholly independent of the natural law of appearances in their mutual relations," and so, is free (CP:29-30). The Fact of Reason thus discloses our

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<sup>14</sup>There are actually several references to the Fact of Reason in the second Critique, some of which appear incompatible. For an attempt to sort them out, see Beck, Commentary, pp.166-75; Allison, Kant's Theory of Freedom Chapter 13; and Rawls's unpublished lectures, "The Fact of Reason," esp. Lecture 1. I am following Rawls in my formulation of The Fact of Reason (Rawls, "Themes," p.102).



freedom to us. Now, this insight--that because we are bound by the moral law, we are also able to act on it--could arguably serve as sufficient evidence that reason can motivate us. But does not that render superfluous Kant's discussion of incentives in Chapter 3, which seems to fill the same purpose?

Not at all. In Chapter 1, Kant is showing that the moral law is valid for us. In Chapter 3, by contrast, he is giving his moral psychology--explaining how the moral law manifests itself in beings such as ourselves ("the phenomenology of respect") and how we experience the call of duty within us. It is the effect of the moral law on the sensuous subject which Kant labels "feeling" (CP:90) and which is the province of Kant's moral psychology. The phenomenology of respect as a feeling will thus differ from his own philosophical insight into the nature of the moral law and what it reveals about us. Such epistemic insights are introduced in Chapter 1 for the purpose of justifying or authenticating the moral law.<sup>15</sup> That discussion is

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<sup>15</sup>Strictly speaking, the moral law can have no deduction, since it does not concern itself with properties of objects given to us. It does, however, admit of an authentication, i.e., a demonstration that it alone can fill a need of reason that is at the same time speculative and practical, namely, to demonstrate the objective reality of freedom (CP:46-8). For a helpful discussion of the Fact of Reason doctrine and its connection to the authentication of the moral law, see John Rawls's "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy," (hereafter "Themes") in Kant's Transcendental Deductions, ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989), pp.81-113. This article draws on Rawls's unpublished lecture series, The Fact of Reason, from the NEH Institute of the summer of 1983, organized by Jerome Schneewind and David Hoy.

intended to show that pure reason is objectively practical, i.e., that beings who recognize the principles of reason as binding on them are also able to act on these principles. How reason actually comes to motivate finite rational creatures, i.e., how reason becomes subjectively practical, is not yet at issue. It is first in Chapter 3 of Part I that Kant takes up this issue.

It is important to note, however, that it is not until Part II of the second Critique, in the slender "Methodology of Pure Practical Reason," that Kant claims to be giving an account of "the way we can make the objectively practical reason also subjectively practical" (CP:151). This seems to suggest that there has been no prior account of how reason comes to be subjectively practical. Since I am claiming that it is precisely the task of Part I, Chapter 3 to show how reason motivates us, we need to establish the connection between that chapter and the Methodology. Kant claims that the purpose of the Methodology is to provide a way to "secure the laws of pure practical reason access to the human mind and an influence on its maxims" (CP:151). It becomes clear, as one reads the chapter, that Kant means by this to provide a method for cultivating moral feeling, i.e., for instilling and strengthening respect for the moral law. The purpose of the Methodology is thus essentially pedagogical. The purpose of Part I, by contrast, is philosophical: to give a theoretical account of how

practical reason operates, in both its truthful and illusory aspects (the Analytic, where we find Chapter 3, gives reason's "rule of truth," while the dialectic exposes and resolves reason's illusory judgments; CP:16). The purpose of Chapter 3 is thus to explain, in a purely theoretical way, how the principles of reason come to influence the subject, whereas the purpose of the Methodology is to show us how we can affect and strengthen this influence.

The connection between the theoretical and the pedagogical discussion is nevertheless intimate, as is evidenced by Kant's incorporation of some of the material from Part I into the Methodology. This inclusion, I shall argue, is precisely what we should expect, given Kant's conception of self-knowledge (truthfulness about one's condition) as that which gives respect its moral worth. We respect the categorical imperative because it is appropriate for us to act on it: the categorical imperative reflects our station in the order of creation, mirroring our essence as finite rational creatures. It is because respect carries this insight into the human condition that it is the only truthful attitude, and it is only because respect is a truthful attitude that it qualifies as the moral motive. Truthfulness in the sense of knowing oneself, then, is what accounts for the merit in acting from respect rather than from some other motive. Because truthfulness is so central to Kant's account of respect, it is not surprising that the

Methodology should draw on the scientific discussion of Part I. For it is precisely a knowledge of our finite nature and that is needed to cultivate the moral motive in such a way as to avoid moral fanaticism--the attitude which takes morality to be a matter of spontaneous compliance with the moral law through mere inclination (CP:162-3). The discussion of Part I thus has a pedagogical significance which dovetails nicely into the discussion in the Methodology.

I have attempted to show not only that the moral motive is a feeling, but also how complex a feeling it is. Respect cannot be understood as a mere inclination, since it is built on rational insights. But it would also be wrong to think of it as purely cognitive, since that ignores its identity as a feeling, its role as "a subjective ground of desire" (CP:90). In Part III, I will consider the types of rational insights respect is based on. In Part IV, I consider the "subjective" dimension of respect, i.e., what sort of feeling it is and what this reveals about its nature as a moral motive.

### Part III: The ideas of reason underlying respect

I noted above that the moral knowledge of the Doctrine of Elements serves as a foundation for the cultivation of

moral feeling in the Methodology. Kant's moral epistemology, however, contains numerous rational insights, only a few of which play a motivating role. In order to arrive at a proper conception of respect, we need therefore to determine which insights have motivating potential and which do not.

Some commentators have taken Kant to hold that purely formal considerations supply the motive for acting on the moral law. They maintain that the recognition of formal consistency in maxims provides a motive for acting on the moral law: that, if one's maxim generates no contradiction between itself and its universalized counterpart, we have a motive to act on the moral law.<sup>16</sup> The idea here seems to be that contradiction is so painful to us that we abhor it and pursue consistency. As evidence, these commentators cite the following type of passage: "the legislative form, in so far as it is contained in the maxim, is the only thing which can constitute a determining ground of the [free] will" (CP:29; also G:460n). This type of passage is then taken to confirm a formalist view of motivation on which the avoidance of contradiction is the sole motivating force.

There are both textual and philosophical problems with this type of reading. The philosophical problem is that it seems to put the cart before the horse: in order to heed the

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<sup>16</sup>A representative of this view is J. Schneewind, who says that it is the "bare lawfulness of the act" that moves us (p.326 in Guyer, ed.).

consistency-requirements implicit in the categorical imperative procedure, we must already have chosen to adhere to the moral law. Consistency, therefore, cannot supply the motive for choosing to adhere to the moral law in the first place. This type of objection might be avoided by claiming that the desire to avoid contradiction is present even before we choose to adhere to the moral law, and so, can supply the motive for acting on the moral law. Textual considerations, however, show that the formalist view of motivation is not what Kant has in mind. As we saw in Part I, what Kant is discussing in the type of passage quoted above (CP:29) is the objective determining ground of the will, i.e., the principle from which the act was done. Formal consistency in one's maxim can indeed characterize the principle on which one acts, but it can never be the subjective determining ground or motive from which one acts. This much becomes clear in the Methodology, where Kant insists that a sheer recognition of formal consistency in maxims does not provide a motive for acting on the moral law. Let us consider that discussion.

The task of the Methodology, we recall, is to specify "the way we can make objectively practical reason also subjectively practical" (CP:151), i.e., to make reason capable not only of judging moral action, but also of motivating us without the help of empirical incentives. Kant divides the Methodology into two steps, the first

describing the process of sharpening moral judgment; the second, the process of strengthening moral feeling (CP:159-161). In the first step, the pupil learns to distinguish between various duties and between the morality and legality of actions. This involves focusing on the maxim and judging whether the act was done not only in accordance with but also for the sake of the moral law (CP:159).<sup>17</sup> Kant stresses that while this process is pleasing because it extends our reasoning powers, it does not itself give rise to a motive to act on the moral law:

But this occupation of the faculty of judgment, which makes us feel our powers of knowledge, is not yet interest in actions and their morality itself. It only enables one to entertain himself with such judging and gives virtue or a turn of mind based on moral laws a form of beauty which is admired but not yet sought ("[Honesty] is praised and starves"). (CP:160)

The process of comparing actions with the moral law enables us to appreciate the beauty of a character which heeds the moral law, but it does not give rise to a moral interest. This is because the process is carried out from a purely formal point of view. Our pleasure here is akin to the pleasure we take in a geometric theorem which we admire for its formal features rather than, say, for its utility. Just as we look at the theorem as something to be contemplated rather than applied, we look at virtue as something to be

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<sup>17</sup>But a maxim is a subjective principle of reason, and that is not the same as a subjective determining ground of the will. This becomes clear in the following passage: "on the concept of an incentive rests that of a maxim" (p.82), which indicates a maxim must be defined after the motive has been given.

"admired but not yet sought." I am not suggesting that morality must be seen as useful in order to move us; my point is only that something other than formal consistency is needed for the moral law to motivate. An additional insight, a deeper appreciation of what the formal requirements of the moral law reveal about us, is needed to generate the feeling of respect and the moral interest intrinsic to it.<sup>1\*</sup>

The additional insight required to produce an interest in morality is the experience of the virtuous disposition as embodied in the pure will. How this insight awakens the moral interest is described in step two of the Methodology. This exercise "lies in calling to notice the purity of will by a vivid exhibition of the moral disposition in examples" (CP:160). The role of examples here is not to encourage the pupil to imitate moral actions, but to allow the pupil to identify with the moral disposition and so to experience it. Only through experiencing the moral disposition by imagining oneself making a moral choice can one cultivate one's

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<sup>1\*</sup>Similar problems arise for the other formalist readings of moral motivation, i.e., those of Andrews Reath, Paul Guyer, and Henry Allison. To respect the moral law, according to Henry Allison, is "to have a sufficient reason (although not a desire) to obey it" (Allison, p.127). But unless Allison explains the sense in which a sufficient reason is subjectively as well as objectively practical--which he has not done--he cannot identify the moral motive with a sufficient reason.



respect.<sup>19</sup> In his example, Kant describes the struggle of deciding whether to confess to an injustice I have committed against a person whom I otherwise dislike. I alone know of my injustice, and several of my inclinations--"vanity, selfishness, and an otherwise not illegitimate antipathy to the man whose rights I have impaired"--speak against confession. But "if I can set aside all these considerations, there is a consciousness of an independence from inclinations and circumstances and of the possibility of being sufficient to myself..." (CP:161, my emphasis; see also CP:87, 152). This suggests that it is the possibility of being self-sufficient that supplies the incentive to morality.

Wherein does this possibility of self-sufficiency reside? In identifying with the moral agent, I discover that I can put aside considerations of vanity, selfishness, etc. and still act. The possibility of acting independently of and even contrary to my inclinations shows that I am free in the following sense: I am able to act on a law that is not conditioned by the forces of nature, a law which does not determine the will "only in respect to its [desired] effect and its sufficiency to bring this effect

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<sup>19</sup>The importance of the first-person point of view is underscored by Kant's use of the pronoun "I" in his example, facilitating the pupil's identification with the agent. Note that the agent can be imaginary just as well as actual: the important feature is the pupil's appreciation of the idea of the moral disposition, regardless of whether or not there are any actual instances of morality in the world (see G:408).

about"(CP:20)--a law which does not make me, as Christine Korsgaard puts it, "a mere conduit for natural forces."<sup>20</sup> I am able, in other words, to act on a law that determines the will "as will" rather than as instrument of my desires. This law commands with a necessity that is "completely independent of pathological conditions, i.e., conditions only contingently related to the will" (CP:20). It none other than the moral law: "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law" (CP:30).

Our ability to act on the moral law exemplifies self-sufficiency in the following way. The moral law is a law, i.e., a principle of reason that is universally valid. Now, the necessity of a universally valid principle depends on no pathological desire, this necessity must originate in my own reason. I myself have legislated this law. Universally valid principles thus exemplify a self-sufficiency of reason: in legislating universal law, "reason need presuppose only itself" (CP:20-1, my emphasis). This self-sufficiency of reason is met with only in universally valid legislation. In any other type of legislation, reason must go beyond itself to external objects of desire in order to summon the binding force for its principle. For instance, the hypothetical imperative, "If you are hungry, get something to eat" is binding only because I am hungry: it

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<sup>20</sup>Korsgaard, "Morality as Freedom" p.32.

binds with a necessity which depends on the physiological fact that I am hungry. My hunger is external to reason, since my reason cannot affect that desire. The hypothetical imperative thus is not universally valid. Since the moral law is the only law which is universally valid, we are self-sufficient only when we act on the moral law. It is this recognition which underlies our respect for the moral law.

I have suggested that governing ourselves through reason exemplifies a self-sufficiency that constitutes the object of respect. But is acting on the moral law really the only way to attain this self-sufficiency? Since hypothetical imperatives are objectively valid (CP:20), they too might seem to exemplify the self-sufficiency I claim to be unique to the moral law. But Kant insists that although the hypothetical imperative is objectively valid, its necessity is not. A principle is objectively valid when it expresses the reasonable course of action--what ought to happen as opposed to what does happen. Now the hypothetical imperative is an objectively valid principle because it prescribes the reasonable means for attaining an end: "To avoid a parking ticket, put money in the meter." It is objectively valid because it is possible for us imperfectly rational creatures to violate it (CP:20): we may fail to put money in the parking meter even though we know we risk getting a ticket. But even though reason prescribes the rule, its necessity does not depend on reason. The

hypothetical imperative is binding only relative to the existence of a contingently occurring desire (my desire to avoid getting a ticket). It stops binding me as soon as I give up this end. Its necessity, in other words, is "dependent only on subjective conditions, and one cannot assume it in equal measure in all men" (CP:20). Because reason must go beyond itself to external objects of desire in order to summon the binding force for its principle, the hypothetical imperative is not universally valid, and so, we are not self-sufficient when we act on it. Only universally valid principles exemplify a self-sufficiency of reason: in legislating universal law, "reason need presuppose only itself" (CP:20-1, my emphasis).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup>This, I think, is the only way of explaining the sense in which acting on the moral law is the supreme instance of self-activity through reason. Governing our passive inclinations through reason can take place in a number of ways, through categorical or hypothetical imperatives. But it is only when we act on the categorical imperative that we are governed purely by reason and so are supremely self-active. It is for this reason that I believe Paul Guyer's account of the self-activity of reason as the source of value in Kant's ethical philosophy (manuscript, Chapter 10, pp.471-4) needs supplementation. Guyer emphasizes that self-activity is important for Kant, but only explains it in terms of free choice according to some rational principle. This fails to explain how choosing to act on a hypothetical imperative--or, for that matter, an evil maxim--is any less active than choosing to act on the moral law. The former types of choices, after all, are both free and principle-guided (and so, are governed by reason). Hence, they would seem to manifest self-activity just as well as moral choices. It is only when we see that the moral law requires nothing else than reason that we can explain why it entails self-sufficiency and self-activity. A similar problem arises for Christine Korsgaard's claim that it is humanity, construed as the power of rational choice, which is the source of value for Kant. On Korsgaard's view, any rational choice is value-conferring ("Kant's Formula of Humanity," *Kant-Studien* 79 (1983), pp.196-7).

The moral interest thus emerges via the following series of rational insights. Through reflecting on the obligation that the moral law imposes on me, I discover that I am free in the negative sense of being able to choose contrary to my inclinations. This leads to a discovery that I am also free in a positive sense: I am autonomous because I am able to legislate universal law (CP:33; G:431, 435). This freedom carries with it a self-sufficiency that is captured by no principle other than the moral law. The recognition that I can exemplify this self-sufficiency only by acting on the moral law is what motivates me to act on it.

"Freedom," however, is a notoriously slippery term. The reader has probably noticed the following ambiguity creeping into my discussion: freedom, on the one hand, can be our capacity for legislating universal law (autonomy); on the other, it can be the state of actually resolving to act on the moral law and for the sake of duty (the good will). The question then arises, are we always free or are we free only when we resolve to act on the moral law? Since we are always able to legislate universal law--even when we fail to act on it--we are always free in the sense of being

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But this fails to account for the connection Kant is trying to draw between respect and the moral law. If reason as such is the object of respect, then any principle-guided choice would be an object of respect. But that goes against Kant's point in step two of the Methodology: that the moral disposition is the proper object of respect. Kant clearly wants to avoid the conclusion that any reason-guided choice is as good as a moral choice.

autonomous (see G:439, where Kant identifies autonomy with "the possible legislation of universal law by means of the maxims of the will"). But we are not always free in the sense of having a good will. It is crucial, therefore, to establish which of these conceptions of freedom is the object of respect, for it is only when we understand the object of respect that we get a proper sense of the attitude which respect embodies.

Before getting into the issue of freedom, I want to conclude my general discussion of the structure of respect by noting that it should be clear by now that Kant did not hold a formalist view of moral motivation, a view on which the avoidance of non-contradiction is the sole motivating force. The moral interest does indeed rely on formal considerations to the extent that it refers to the universal validity of laws. But it is generated only by going beyond considerations of universal validity to a deeper realization about human nature. We feel respect for the moral law when we reflect on what the formal demands of the moral law reveal about us--namely, that we ourselves, as the authors of universal law, are able fully to determine ourselves and are therefore free. It is freedom, then, and not the pain of contradiction, that is the proper object of respect.

In what sense is freedom the object of respect? Do we respect freedom as the capacity to legislate universal law or as the actual adherence to the moral law? Sometimes Kant

says that we respect our capacity for legislating universal law. He calls this capacity our "personality" and says that "the idea of personality awakens respect" (CP:87). That he conceives of personality as a kind of freedom is clear from the following definition of personality:

It is...the freedom and independence from the mechanism of nature regarded as a capacity of a being which is subject to special laws (pure practical laws given by its own reason), so that the person as belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality so far as he belongs to the intelligible world. (CP:87)

Freedom, in the sense of personality, is the capacity to legislate universal laws, i.e., laws of pure practical reason. If personality is the proper object of respect, then the actual representation of the moral disposition is not needed to awaken respect, since our reflection on the mere capacity to legislate universal law--a capacity we all have in virtue of our reason--is sufficient to awaken respect. For other passages which confirm this reading of respect, see G:436, 439-440. These passages refer to humanity rather than personality, but "humanity" is here being used in the same sense as "personality." Thus, G:440: "And the dignity of humanity consists just in its capacity to legislate universal law, though with the condition of humanity's being at the same time itself subject to this very same legislation." "Humanity" or "personality," in short, signifies autonomy construed as our capacity to legislate universal law. Since this is a property which belongs to every rational being, every rational being is an

object of respect, on this reading. The strength of this reading is that it captures the spirit of Kant's doctrine of humanity as an end in itself, on which every human being, not just those who are virtuous, is an end in itself (G:428). Even though we do not necessarily act on the moral law, we are still capable of legislating universal law, and this makes us worthy of respect.<sup>22</sup>

Other passages suggest that Kant has a more exclusive conception of the object of respect: that what we respect is not something which automatically belongs to us in virtue of our reason, but rather, something we must earn. These passages suggest that the proper object of respect is the good will, the will which acts from a sense of duty (G:400-1). Consider:

Our own will, insofar as it were to act only under the condition of its being able to legislate universal law by means of its maxims--this will, ideally possible for us, is the proper object of respect. (G:440, *my emphasis*)

Here, the object of respect is not a property we all share in virtue of our reason (*viz.*, autonomy), but rather, the will which intends to act only from the idea of duty: the good will. To put it another way, virtue is here the object of respect. That Kant conceives of virtue as a form of freedom, and that this type of freedom is the proper object

<sup>22</sup>For an illuminating discussion of the meaning of human dignity centering on the problem I have been considering and issuing in the reading of humanity as an end in itself that I just put forth, see Hardy Jones, Kant's Principle of Personality (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1971), pp.127-135.



of respect, is also suggested by the following passage: "The law of duty, through the positive worth which obedience to it makes us feel, finds easier access through the respect for ourselves in the consciousness of our freedom" (CP:161). Also: "the pure thought of virtue...is the strongest incentive to the good" (CP:152; also 156). These passages suggest that the object of respect is not autonomy, but virtue.

The strength of the latter view of respect is that it makes virtue self-motivating: we need not seek a source of value outside of morality, since it is morality itself which motivates us. This, of course, can also be seen as a source of weakness, for how can morality motivate those who are not already disposed toward it? Kant, however, thinks all of us are disposed toward morality. He thinks that insofar as the moral law confronts us at all (and it does confront every rational being), we have a motive to act on it. He refers to this disposition as the "predisposition to personality" (R:21-3), and defines it as "the capacity for respect for the moral law as in itself a sufficient incentive of the will" (R:22-3). Kant is not naively claiming that we desire by nature to be virtuous. He is only making room for the motive to morality, all the while leaving open the possibility of immoral choice: we are always able to choose against morality because we have free will or "Willkür."

Which, then, is the proper object of respect: autonomy or morality? Is it possible to reconcile the reading of respect on which virtue is "the strongest incentive to the good" with the reading on which autonomy is the object of respect? Kant thinks so. He makes virtue the primary object of respect, but makes humanity derivatively an object of respect because it is the necessary condition of virtue. Without autonomy, a good will could not exist because a good will must act out of respect for a self-made law. Since a good will is the only thing in the world that is good without qualification (G:393), autonomy, as the necessary precondition of the good will, is also an end in itself. This, at any rate, is Kant's reasoning at G:437-440, where he seeks to connect the concept of humanity (autonomy) as an end in itself with the concept of the good will. He speaks of the need to find something which is an end in itself, and derives it by reference to the idea of "a possible absolutely good will":

Now this end can be nothing but the subject of all possible ends themselves, because the subject is at the same time the subject of a possible absolutely good will; for such a will cannot without contradiction be subordinated to any other object (G:437, emphasis mine).

"The subject of all possible ends themselves," or the rational subject, is an end in itself because it alone can be the subject of a good will. That the rational subject is an end in itself because it is able to legislate universal law rather than because it is able to legislate rational

principles in general becomes clear in the following passage:

Now there follows incontestably from this that every rational being as an end in himself must be able to regard himself with reference to all laws to which he may be subject as being at the same time the legislator of universal law, for just this very fitness of his maxims for the legislation of universal law distinguishes him as an end in himself. (G:438, emphasis mine)

Humanity, or rational nature, is an end in itself because it is able to legislate universal law. But why should the legislation of universal law be important? For no other reason than that it is a necessary prerequisite for the existence of a good will. The good will is the proper object of respect, but humanity is derivatively an object of respect because it is indispensable for the existence of a good will. That it is the good will rather than humanity that is the primary object of respect becomes clear in the following passage, which we have already quoted:

Our own will, insofar as it were to act only under the condition of its being able to legislate universal law by means of its maxims--this will, ideally possible for us, is the proper object of respect. (G:440, emphasis mine)

Even though the good will is the proper object of respect, humanity, as rational nature capable of legislating universal law, is an object of respect (has "dignity") because it has the potential for producing a good will:

Now morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in himself, for only thereby can he be a legislating member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality and humanity, insofar as it is

capable of morality, alone have dignity. (G:435-6; see also CP:87)

Humanity, then, has dignity insofar as it is capable of morality. It is only because it has the capacity for realizing a good will that humanity, or rational nature, is an object of respect.

It should be noted that on this argument, any aspect of rational nature that is necessary for the existence of the good will--for example, our animal being--is thereby an object of respect. This might seem objectionable, since it appears to water down the notion of respect. Could it really be that our animal being deserves respect? Kant suggests a positive answer to this question when, in his catalogue of perfect duties to oneself in The Doctrine of Virtue, he includes not only the duty to preserve the mental capacities required for the realization of a good will, but also the duty to preserve the physical substratum required for the existence of a good will. This suggests that our animal nature, as part of the rational nature required for the existence of a good will, is an end in itself. The inference does appear drastic, but as long as one keeps in mind that something is an end in itself only because it is indispensable to a good will, and not because of some other value it may have, the conclusion makes sense. The idea of a good will confers value on the necessary conditions of a good will.

We have seen that the idea of virtue, or equivalently, the idea of a good will, is the proper object of respect. In the next section, I will consider how this idea gives rise to the feeling of respect, and what this process discloses about respect as an attitude and as a moral motive.

#### Part IV: The genesis and nature of respect

In considering the process by which the idea of a good will awakens respect in us, it is important to note from the outset that the mere idea of virtue suffices to engender the feeling of respect. We do not need to experience an actual instance of virtue--whether in ourselves or in others--in order to feel respect. All we need to do is to hold before the mind's eye the idea or image of virtue--to imagine, in other words, a person who resolves to act for the sake of duty. Since this is a somewhat controversial claim, I will offer some justification for it.

If we had to experience virtue in ourselves in order to feel respect, it would be hard to see how the process of moral education could get off the ground. For we would then have to be virtuous before we could cultivate the moral motive, and that would defeat the purpose of moral education.       Granted, moral education could get off the

ground if we had to observe virtue in others (as "moral paragons"). But there is a separate reason to be skeptical about the possibility of experiencing actual cases of virtue, whether in ourselves or in others, and that is the inscrutability of motives. Kant thinks we can never be sure that what appears to be a virtuous action was not in fact done from self-love. Since "we can never...completely plumb the depths of the secret incentives of our actions," "there is absolutely no possibility by means of experience to make out with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action...has rested solely on moral grounds" (G:407). We can never point to an actual instance of virtue. If we had to experience an actual case of virtue before we could feel respect, we could never feel respect, since there is no certifiable instance of virtue.

However, there are passages which suggest that we can actually know when we have acted morally and that we need to experience the moral disposition within us in order to feel respect. Thus: "the law of duty, through the positive worth which obedience to it makes us feel, finds easier access through respect for ourselves in the consciousness of our freedom" (CP:161). Kant goes on to suggest that the awareness of one's actual moral worth (or what he here calls our "freedom") is "the best, indeed the only, guard that can keep ignoble and corrupting influences from bursting in upon the mind" (CP:161). These passages suggest that in order to

cultivate the moral motive, we need actually to have adopted duty as our incentive--i.e., have made a pure moral resolution--and that merely imagining the moral disposition is not sufficient to engender respect in us. (Note that this would confirm the view I argued against in Part I--the view which claims that respect is the effect of moral willing.)

The passages, however, can be read another way. Indeed, I want to suggest, there is only one coherent way of reading them, given Kant's thesis of the inscrutability of motives, and that is to read "the positive worth which obedience to [the law of duty] makes us feel" as the worth we feel when we imagine ourselves to be acting for the sake of duty, whether or not we actually do. We cannot know, for any given action, whether we had the moral disposition, i.e., adhered to the law for the sake of duty. We can, however, know whether our action had legality, i.e., did not violate the moral law. The "positive worth" we feel in obeying the law thus refers to the negative awareness of not having violated the law, and leaves open the question of whether the moral disposition was actually present. A consciousness of the legality of our action, though by no means a sufficient condition for having moral worth, lets us know, at least, that we have not violated the moral law. It is the consciousness of legality, then, that Kant describes as "the consciousness that [a person] has honored and

preserved humanity in his own person and in its dignity, so that he does not have to shame himself in his own eyes" (CP:88). So the consciousness of a "positive worth" should not be taken as the consciousness of morality--of having acted for the sake of duty--but only as the consciousness that one has not done anything contrary to duty, whatever one's motive.

Notice, however, that even though we can never tell whether respect was our actual motive in a given action, we can still feel respect and strengthen it so as to make it easier to act from respect. And we can do this without thinking of actual acts we or others have undertaken. Since the process of strengthening respect mimics the genesis of respect, we can learn something about the nature of respect by considering its cultivation. The moral motive is brought to mind "through examples" (CP:160), where this involves imagining cases of virtuous acts and coming to identify with the disposition of the imagined agents. It is this process of identification which "teaches a man to feel his own worth" (CP:152). What does "his own worth" involve? It refers not to the pupil's actual virtue but to his capacity for virtue: the moral disposition is presented as an idea which the pupil comes to value and so wants to realize. In thinking of the moral disposition, in short, the pupil envisions "the greatness of soul to which he sees himself called" (CP:152). We see again that it is the thought of



virtue, and not actual instances of virtue, which is the object of respect.

What type of attitude does respect embody? Is it a process of "glorying" in our capacity for virtue, or is it something slightly more sober? In the third Critique, Kant defines respect as follows: "The feeling of our incapacity to attain to an idea that is a law for us, is RESPECT" (CJ:257, emphasis mine). The awareness of an incapacity does not seem much of a cause for celebration. Neither does it seem to carry the motivating force that respect, as an incentive, must have. How can such a negative feeling serve as an incentive to morality?

To approach an answer, and to see what incapacity Kant has in mind, we need to realize that the very idea of virtue contains a negative element: virtue is the "moral disposition in conflict, and not holiness in the supposed possession of perfect purity of the intentions of the will" (CP:84, emphasis mine; see also 32-3, 80-1, 83). This element of conflict is crucial. Without it, the disposition in question would be not virtue but moral fanaticism--the attitude of those who think that virtue comes naturally to them and "flatter themselves with a spontaneous goodness of heart" (CP:84-5). Such an attitude is always inherently false because it ignores the fact that we are finite rational creatures, creatures who have sensuous desires in

addition to reason and so do not by nature act on the moral law:

If a rational creature could ever attain the stage of thoroughly liking to do all moral laws, it would mean that there was no possibility of there being in him a desire which could tempt him to deviate from them, for overcoming such a desire always costs the subject some sacrifice and requires self-compulsion, i.e., an inner constraint to do what one does not quite like to do. To such a level of moral disposition no creature can ever attain. For since he is a creature, and consequently is always dependent with respect to what he needs for complete satisfaction with his condition, he can never be wholly free from desires and inclinations which, because they rest on physical causes, do not of themselves agree with the moral law, which has an entirely different source. (CP:83-4)

Because we are finite rational creatures, moral requirements strike us as constraints, not as precepts which we gladly follow. To deny this is to deceive ourselves about our condition:

For men and all rational creatures, the moral necessity is a constraint, an obligation. Every action based on it is to be considered as duty, and not as a manner of acting which we naturally favor or which we sometimes might favor. This would be tantamount to believing we could finally bring it about that, without respect for the law (which is always connected with fear or at least apprehension that we might transgress it) we, like the independent deity, might come into possession of holiness of will through irrefragable agreement of the will with the pure moral law becoming, as it were, our very nature. (CP:81)

To think we can come to act morally by nature is to think we are God. This is the height of self-deception, since it denies that we have natural desires. To act from respect for the moral law, by contrast, is to recognize that it will always be a struggle for us inclination-bound creatures to meet the demands of the moral law. When Kant defines

respect as "the feeling of our incapacity to attain to an idea that is a law for us," he is calling attention to just this sense of resistance. Far from being a super-rational denial of physicality, virtue is actually an acknowledgement of our physical nature. To act virtuously is to be true to our nature as finite rational beings.

To acknowledge the resistance we inevitably feel when confronted with the moral law is to accept suffering as our station in life. For the moral law imposes on us a requirement that we do not like to comply with, but complying with it is nevertheless imperative. Now, recall that Kant thinks the idea of virtue is "the strongest incentive to the good" (CP:152). But we have just learned that virtue involves suffering. Can the idea of suffering really become an incentive? Kant thinks so: he says that "morality must have more power over the human heart the more purely it is presented," and that "it is in suffering" that morality is most purely presented (CP:156, emphasis mine). The idea of suffering, then, is the strongest incentive to virtue! How is this possible?

Kant's own explanation is of no great help. He has just described the plight of an honest man who, in the face of threats to his well-being and even to his life, refuses to give false testimony against Anne Boleyn. "All the admiration and even the endeavor to be like this character," he says, "rest here solely on the purity of the moral

principle, which can be clearly shown only by removing from the incentive of the action everything which men might count as a part of happiness" (CP:156). The incentive to morality is isolated by contrasting it with empirical incentives--through imagining a situation like the one above, in which the agent refuses to act on empirical incentives. But a process of elimination discloses nothing about the nature of the moral incentive itself.

Kant's emphatic denial that satisfaction of any sort--whether it be sensuous or rational--is an incentive to morality (CP:116) as well as his conception of the moral law as a categorical imperative should make us wary of any desire-fulfillment view of moral motivation. Respect is not a desire. Nevertheless, it is supposed to be able to motivate us. How can a feeling motivate without being a desire? One way is to think of respect as signifying something about our nature: as expressing what we are rather than pointing to something we want to be. Of course, this might seem to presuppose that we are satisfied with what we are, and so, would seem to presuppose that we desire to be that way. If so, respect, though not itself a desire, would reflect or confirm a desire, and so would seem to return us to a desire-fulfillment view of moral motivation. But we do not need to think of ourselves as having any particular attitude toward our nature. After all, it is just given to us: it is our essence, neither good nor bad. If we can

connect respect for the moral law to our essence as finite rational creatures, we might then be able to conceive of respect as the only truthful attitude. As an attitude, respect could be distinguished from a desire, but it would still be capable of motivating us in the sense of confirming our complete essence.

Of course, any act could be seen as confirming what we are in the sense of being undertaken by us. However, not all actions confirm our complete essence. Acting for the sake of my own happiness, for instance, confirms my animal identity as well as my capacity for prudential reasoning. But it neglects my capacity to act on the moral law, for it violates its character as an unconditional principle by subordinating it to the condition of my own happiness (see R:31-2). Were I to subordinate my own happiness to the requirements of the moral law, by contrast, I would be confirming both my capacity for prudential reasoning and my capacity for moral reasoning, for I would then seek to satisfy my inclinations only on the condition that the moral law allowed it. I would then be preserving "the original moral order among the incentives" (R:45-6; see also 44)--an ordering which incorporates the spectrum of possible incentives, subordinating some to others in such a way that the essence of each is preserved (for an account of these

incentives, see R:21-3). Only actions which heed the moral law preserve this order and express our full essence.<sup>23</sup>

The moral law is the supreme law of our being--a law which does not exclude lower principles but gives them rein only on the condition that it is itself fulfilled. This limiting aspect of the moral law is reflected in the negative, painful side of respect. This side of respect has two aspects: the moral law "checks selfishness" and "strikes down self-conceit" (CP:73). It checks selfishness by restricting the satisfaction of our desires to the condition of agreeing with the moral law. But it strikes down self-conceit. Self-conceit is self-love "when it makes itself legislative and an unconditional practical principle" (CP:74), and so might be expressed by the principle, "make the satisfaction of your desires your highest end."<sup>24</sup> It is struck down when the moral law shows itself to be the only objective and universally valid practical principle--

<sup>23</sup>For an early version of this type of argument, see Sermon II of Joseph Butler Sermons, reprinted in J. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant: An Anthology, Volume II (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), esp. pp.533-4. Butler is trying to show that those who are moral are "a law unto themselves" (Rom:2:14) in the sense that they follow their proper nature, where man's "proper nature" is characterized by an ordering of principles, with the passions at the bottom, "cool self-love" in the middle, and the moral conscience at the top. Failing to act according to one's conscience is to act "disproportionately to one's nature" in the sense that one subordinates to other principles the principle which is in fact superior.

<sup>24</sup>In this formulation of the principle of self-conceit, I am following Henry Allison in Kant's Theory of Freedom, p.124. For a definition of self-love as the principle of one's own happiness, see CP:22.

that is, the only genuine law (CP:20-1). In both of these cases, our pathologically determined self tries to make its pretensions acceptable "as first and original claims, just as if it were our entire self" (CP:74, emphasis mine). The moral law strikes down these pretensions by reminding us that they do not express our entire self. Again, we see that Kant conceives of the moral law as the most complete expression of our self. In reflecting on the idea of virtue, we realize that suffering is the inevitable upshot of the way the moral law expresses itself in the natural order of incentives. Suffering, then, becomes part of the expression of our complete nature.

Morality is freedom in the sense of self-knowledge. It has more to do with enlightenment than with liberating us from the fetters of nature. Morality frees us from dominance by natural inclinations only to the extent that it confirms our capacity to ~~resist~~ them; but that capacity, attributable to our ever-present freedom of choice, is confirmed by any choice. Still, we can never completely rid ourselves from our dependence on nature; neither should we try, for to think we can is to delude ourselves about our identity. Morality, at its core, is the acceptance of our essence as finite rational creatures, and so, is identical with self-knowledge. The dictum of the critical project--Know your limits!--thus reverberates through Kant's ethical corpus.

### Chapter 3:

#### Feelings Associated with Our Duties Toward Ourselves

In Kant's moral scheme, each of us has an unconditional value which can never diminish regardless of the morality or immorality of our actions. We have this value in virtue of our humanity, our identity as legislators of the moral law. Because every human being has an unconditional worth, morality imposes certain duties on us directing us to treat ourselves and others as ends-in-themselves--duties, that is, prohibiting others from treating us as means to their ends and prohibiting us from making ourselves a means to the ends of ourselves or others.<sup>1</sup> Fulfilling these duties gives us moral worth and/or moral perfection (thereby making us worthy of happiness) (CPpR:61-62, 110-11).<sup>2</sup> While our moral perfection depends on our moral choices, the value of our humanity is independent of circumstance and of choice: it exists an end-in-itself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In Chapter 5, I will consider the relation of the Formula of the End-In-Itself to our duties of love toward others, that is, as a basis for deriving a duty to not only avoid interfering with but also to promote the ends of others.

<sup>2</sup>While our moral worth increases only by acting from the motive of duty, our moral perfection can be augmented even when we fulfill our duties in a merely legal way.

<sup>3</sup>Kant's various claims about humanity (or rational nature) and why it exists as an end-in-itself have been the source of much speculation. At G:428-9, and 435-6, Kant suggests that human beings are ends-in-themselves because they are legislators of the moral law and are hence able to form universalizable maxims in response to the concept of duty. At G:437-440, he



Humanity has this absolute value because it exists as the necessary condition of possibility of a good will, the only unconditionally valuable thing in the world. A good will is good unconditionally because unlike gifts of nature and of fortune (e.g., health and wealth) which, though they have a certain value in themselves, are only morally good under certain qualifications (wealth, for instance, is good only if put to a good use), a good will is good without qualification (G:437; 393-94).<sup>\*</sup> The fact that the locus of

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connects this conception of humanity with the absolute value of a good will, suggesting that human beings are ends-in-themselves because they are the potential vessels of a good will, the only absolutely valuable thing in the world (see G:393). At DV:387 and 392, however, Kant thinks of humanity more generally as the capacity to set and to pursue ends, whether moral or not. Although these definitions are not strictly incompatible--in order to act virtuously one must, after all, not only legislate moral law but also be able to set and pursue ends--many commentators still see it as necessary to come down on one side of the issue. Those who see humanity as the general capacity to set and pursue ends are the majority and include Thomas Hill, Jr. in "Humanity as an End in Itself," Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory, 38-57 (see especially 38-41 or a helpful discussion of whether humanity refers to rational nature or more specifically to human nature), Christine Korsgaard in "Kant's Formula of Humanity," and Onora O'Neill in "Between Consenting Adults," Constructions of Reason, 105-25, (esp. 114-15). For a critical account which interprets humanity as the capacity for distinctively moral action, see Pepita Haezrahi, "The Concept of Man as an End-in-Himself," in Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays, 291-313. Since Kant argues for the unconditional value of a good will in terms of its being good without qualification (G:393-4), I place myself in the latter camp, since the structural analogy between the absolute value of a good will and that of humanity must be preserved and the capacity to set and realize ends, though good, is not good without qualification, since we can set and realize evil ends.

<sup>\*</sup>That Kant makes the good will an unconditional value and humanity the mere condition of possibility of a good will should not be taken imply that the unconditional value of the good will cannot "transfer" itself to humanity. Humanity is a necessary

humanity is the individual gives each of us, qua individual, a dignity which utilitarians, who use a merely contingent (though still intrinsic) source of value (viz. pleasure) have a hard time defining.

As bearers of humanity we possess dignity (DV:462). In this chapter, I consider the emotional implications of this Kantian starting point. I show that by cultivating certain self-regarding emotions--in particular, those which reflect a dignified attitude towards ourselves (e.g., pride)--we create good character and become better prepared to carry out our duties toward ourselves.

My prime concern is show that cultivating one's feelings--both natural and moral--in accordance with the idea of one's dignity not only strengthens and refines the feelings themselves but also helps establish good character in the moral sense. Among our character traits are our long-standing dispositions to feeling, and we shape good moral character partly by refining and cultivating our sensuous character. To this end, I will first show that knowing one's sensible character is a moral requirement, for Kant. Knowing one's own dispositions to feel certain ways in certain circumstances and how these dispositions figure

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condition of possibility of a good will, and the condition of possibility for the realization of something absolutely valuable is, qua such a condition of possibility, also absolutely valuable. Kant's move should also not be taken to imply that the value of the good will is somehow less than, because "contingent" upon, that of humanity, since he derives the value of humanity from that of the good will rather than vice versa.

in one's character (the way one expresses them in word, thought and deed) is a necessary precondition for moral improvement--that is, for virtue as strength of will.

The main "dignity-feelings" I plan here to discuss are courage, pride, and love of honor. Each of these feelings is bound up with a sense of dignity and is thus a means for cultivating other emotions in accordance with the idea of our dignity, thereby bringing them in line with reason. Two other morally significant feelings bound up with the demand to live up to our dignity are the pleasure and pain we feel when our conscience judges our actions or intentions good or bad, respectively. But before considering what it is to cultivate one's emotions in accordance with the idea of dignity, we need to consider just why dignity should be a leading idea in our lives.

### I. The Significance of Dignity

Why is it so important to live a dignified life? Why isn't it just as valuable to live a wild and natural life, free of the stiffness conveyed by the word "dignity"? The obvious but unpenetrating Kantian answer is that insofar as we have chosen to be moral at all, we have also chosen to value dignity, since heeding the dignity of our humanity is just what we are doing when we live up to the requirements

of the moral law (DV:420). To ask why dignity is important is in this sense to ask "Why be moral?"--a question which Kant, being the sophisticated moral philosopher he was, never took seriously.

But we can also give a deeper Kantian answer to why dignity should be a leading idea in our lives. Although it is possible to have good character and still live a wild and natural life, living such a life without a sense of dignity will most likely produce a weak and compromising character. For without a sense of dignity, one is incapable of standing for anything--whether it be the truth, one's real needs, or one's commitments. And what is good character if it does not involve the ability to stand for something? We should therefore heed our dignity for the sake of shaping good character. Kant's own use of "dignity" is of course linked up with moral concerns: he is not immediately interested in whether our sense of dignity can also further character in a more individualized sense (and we might have to look to Nietzsche for such an argument); but in Part V, I will give two character sketches which I hope will at least show that the universal commands of morality need not force our individual personalities into a cookie-cutter conformism, since the moral law actually dictates that we use our individual character traits--including dispositions to feeling which are distinctive of us--to strengthen morality within us.

What, then, is a sense of dignity? To have sense of dignity, according to Kant, is have a sense of one's absolute worth--a worth which stems from the fact that one not only faces but also places oneself under moral obligations. All practically rational beings, as legislators of the moral law, possess this worth. Some will certainly find this an extremely narrow definition of human dignity. But whether or not we agree with Kant on his definition the object of dignity (i.e., the capacity in virtue of which we possess dignity), we can agree that a sense of dignity is central to cultivating character in the moral sense, since steadfastness and resolution are dignified traits which are essential to the moral individual. In order to live up to one's dignity and absolute worth--an endeavor which often involves great personal sacrifice--one needs both pride and courage: pride in one's unconditional worth and the courage and perseverance to live up to it (LE:126-129). Pride and courage are in this sense necessary attributes of a morally steadfast character, a character disposed to virtue.

That Kant took a sense of dignity to be essential to the cultivation of good moral character is implicit in his aversion toward any form of dishonesty. Kant's close linkage between the notions of honesty, dignity, and good character is especially clear in the following passage from the Anthropology:

In short, the sole proof a man's consciousness affords him that he has good character is his having made it his supreme maxim to be truthful, both in his admissions to himself and in his conduct toward every other man. And since having character is both the minimum that can be required of a reasonable man and the maximum of inner worth (of human dignity), to be a man of principles (to have a determinate character) must be possible for the most ordinary human reason and yet, according to its dignity, surpass the greatest talent (A:159).

Kant thus sees honesty as a precondition for preserving one's dignity and so, for shaping good character. Moreover, Kant's classification of honesty not as a duty toward others but as a duty toward ourselves (DV:429; LE:118) suggests that dishonesty injures the very core of our being.<sup>2</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup>In the Lectures on Ethics, Kant also classifies truthfulness in social intercourse as a duty toward others (LE:224) primarily because the free exchange of sentiments is a condition of society and of the enjoyment of conversation. In the Doctrine of Virtue, however, it is clear that he thinks dishonesty does something much more insidious than that: it not only undermines the listener's capacity to take pleasure in the conversation honesty but annihilates the speaker's dignity. That is why lying is always a duty toward ourselves in the Doctrine of Virtue. My claim that honesty is important primarily for the purpose of shaping a strong character supports both Kant's narrow classification of it as a duty toward ourselves and his broader (and earlier) conception of honesty also as a stance we need to hold because of the social value of communicating our sentiments in word, expression and gesture. Such interaction, I shall show in Chapter 4, is the foremost "training ground" for shaping a virtuous disposition. To shape strong moral character, we need to be honest toward ourselves regarding our faults and limitations, including wicked propensities in our passions; and

lying, man may surely do harm to others; but worse, he "throws away and, as it were, annihilates his dignity as a man" (DV:429). Kant thus sees honesty as a precondition for preserving our own dignity. In lying, we show a weak and cowardly character: we hide behind lies, not daring to reveal or even acknowledge who we really are. Cowardice makes us lose our self-respect; and the person who has no self-respect cannot have good moral character, since self-respect is the very foundation of moral self-awareness. Truthfulness toward oneself and others is thus a precondition for having good character in the moral sense.

A more detailed explanation of why honesty--and in the case of our duties toward ourselves, especially honesty toward oneself--is crucial to having good character can be found in the following passage, where Kant gives his exposition of the three vices opposed to man's duty toward himself only as a moral being:

The vices contrary to this duty are lying, avarice, and false humility (servility). These adopt principles that are directly contrary to man's character as a moral being (in terms of its very form), that is, to inner freedom, the innate dignity of man, which is

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since much of our knowledge about our own sentiments comes from what we experience in communication with others--whether as actor, demonstrator, friend, disputer or converser--dishonesty (hiding ourselves) in conversation robs us of a valuable opportunity for learning about our own beliefs and emotional tendencies, both good and bad.

tantamount to saying that they make it one's basic principle to have no basic principle and hence no character,\* that is, to throw oneself away and make oneself an object of contempt. The virtue that is opposed to all these vices could be called love of honor (honestas interna, iustum sui aestimium), a cast of mind far removed from ambition (ambitio) (which can be quite mean). But it will appear prominently later on, under this name (DV:420).<sup>7</sup>

The three vices which Kant names--lying, avarice, and false humility--are all forms of deception which make it impossible to have good character: "they make it one's basic principle to have no basic principle and hence no character, that is, to throw oneself away and make oneself an object of contempt." Here, truthfulness becomes the main prerequisite for good moral character--for heeding one's sense of dignity. Before going on to explore the full implications of the centrality of truthfulness toward oneself in Kant's moral philosophy, I shall briefly explain why two of the

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\*My emphasis.

<sup>7</sup>Kant does not discuss love of honor "later on" in the Doctrine of Virtue. Ambition does receive short treatment in connection with his discussion of servility, but love of honor remains unmentioned. This leads me to believe that "it" in the last sentence refers not to ambition but to love of honor. Fortunately, there is a long and interesting discussion of love of honor in the Lectures on Ethics, which I will have occasion to discuss in Section III.



aforementioned forms of dishonesty--lying and false humility--work directly against morally good character.

Lying to oneself or to others is an inability to stand for the truth. It is the basest form of deception, revealing a cowardice and an inability to stand for one's qualities and deeds which makes the liar lose his self-respect--"He makes himself contemptible in his own eyes and violates the dignity of humanity in his own person" (DV:429)--and others lose their respect for him. The liar usually lies because he is afraid of the consequences of telling the truth. In ordinary cases, the expected consequences include a harsh judgment from others--a judgment which he expects to be well-founded and against which he takes himself to have no defense.\* But in expecting a harsh and justified judgment from others, the liar reveals a low opinion of himself. If he thought highly of himself, he would expect others to think likewise; he would not feel the need to lie. In his fearfulness of the opinions of others, the liar betrays his sense that he has less worth than they. Kant stresses the power of the world's judgment in correcting our own opinions: "our

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\*Kant himself never explains why we have a propensity to lie. He simply says we do: "it already belongs to the basic composition of a human creature and to the concept of his species to explore the thoughts of others but to withhold one's own--a nice quality that does not fail to progress gradually from dissimulation to deception and finally to lying" (A:192). In what follows, I try to describe the motivation for lying in terms of the weaknesses of character which often lead up to it.

cognitions must stand the test of universal reason....Others may err as well, but it is unlikely that they would fall into exactly the same trap as ourselves" (LE:190). But this corrective force of other people's judgment is cancelled if one misleads them from the outset and presumes a negative judgment of oneself. To do so is directly contrary to dignity, which gives every person an unconditional source of value. It is this psychological pattern of underestimating one's worth which characterizes the liar.

The person who has an unduly high opinion of herself can of course also rob herself of the corrective of others' opinions, but she does so not through external lies but through ignoring the judgment of others when they do not harmonize with her high opinion of herself. Such a person is guilty of arrogance (LE:237-8), which is a form of internal lying when others are judging fairly. At bottom, however, the arrogant person shows the same lack of self-respect and of self-esteem as the "ordinary" liar of the previous paragraph: both use others as means because they would find it easy to be used as means. As Kant puts it, "an arrogant man is always mean in the depths of his soul. For he would not demand that others think little of themselves in comparison with him unless he knew that, were his fortune suddenly to change, he himself would not find it hard to grovel and to waive any claim to respect from others" (DV:466).

A person can of course also have a high opinion of herself which is well-founded, e.g., when most people do not understand her and therefore judge her unfairly. Such a person is not lying to herself when she ignores the opinions of others; she simply displays the "noble pride" which is the mark of good character (LE:126). Indeed, paying heed to such malicious judgments "is already a sign of weakness," unbefitting to the upright character (A:159); and that is why Kant holds that "a tyranny of popular mores would be contrary to man's duty to himself" (DV:464).

Having made these qualifications, we can safely make the following generalization: lying is usually motivated by an inadequate sense of one's own worth with respect to others' opinion of oneself--a weakness of character. And most insidiously, lying not only betrays a weakness, but also makes one weaker, for in erecting barriers of falsehood between oneself and the world, one eliminates a great source of strength, namely the bonds of communication and unconcealed affection which can exist between oneself and other human beings (see Chapter 5). Since strength is directly conducive to good character--virtue is, after all, strength of will, which can be facilitated by cultivating a willingness to do one's duty--and lying not only signals lack of strength (in the form of lack of self-respect), but also deprives one of the strength one derives from open social ties, lying works directly against good character.

False humility, finally, or servility toward other human beings, is perhaps the clearest example of failing to heed one's dignity. It involves deceiving oneself about one's identity as a practically rational being. Since this identity makes one as valuable as any other human being--absolutely valuable--one has no reason to be servile towards others (DV:435-6). Indeed, measuring our worth by comparing ourselves with others instead of with the moral law is outright harmful because there will always be individuals whom we admire, and concluding that we are less worthy than they are "makes us hate them and produces envy and jealousy" (LE:137), emotions which damage our dignity. Treating others in a servile way is equally harmful: it reveals cowardice and bad character because it involves taking the easy way out, choosing courses of action which appeal to others through flattery or aggrandizement of them rather than through making them, through their own accord, respect us. The aspiring actress who "sleeps" her way up through the Hollywood hierarchy to acquire acting jobs is an example of the servile character: she gains the favor of others not by proving that she has the talent and force of personality needed for good acting but by pleasing them in ways which demean her person. The servile person presumes that she has less worth than others, and so fails to heed her own innate dignity, outmatched by no other human being but only by the moral law (DV:436).

Avoiding the vices of lying and servility-- each a form of dishonesty--is then at least the first step towards cultivating a good character. I will now go on to show that Kant's requirement of honesty reaches deeper than merely asking us to refrain from lying, avarice and false humility. It also extends to knowing our particular sensuous character and searching our hearts for our true motives, and here conscience plays a key role. But before discussing conscience and the status of Kant's honesty-requirement-- which, at bottom, amounts to a requirement for self-knowledge--in light of his thesis of the inscrutability of our motives and in light of the possibility of self-deception, I will consider how Kant can hold that morality requires us to know and to change our particular sensuous characters when he also suggests that our moral character is all we can really change.

## Section II: The Moral Significance of Individual Character

In the Anthropology, Kant distinguishes between having a certain type of character and having moral character simpliciter: "on the one hand we say that a certain man has this or that (physical) character or, on the other hand, that he has character simply (moral character). In this latter sense there is only one character--a man either has

it or has no character at all" (A:151, my emphasis). A man can be born with a certain temperament and certain emotional dispositions which form his sensuous character, but if he does not abide by moral principles--the most important of which is truthfulness\*--he has no character at all in the moral sense. Kant goes on to strongly suggest that we can change only our moral character and not our sensuous constitution. He describes four types of sensuous character--the sanguine, the melancholy, the choleric and the phlegmatic (A:153-7)<sup>10</sup>--all of which exemplify "what nature makes of man;" moral character, by contrast, shows "what man makes of himself" (A:157). Throughout his discussion of these four temperaments, he stresses that he is only referring to a person's sensuous constitution and not to his "way of thinking" (A:157), which he freely adopts and which belongs to his moral character. All this might lead one to believe that a person's sensuous character is irrelevant to her moral character, since only the latter can be changed. But in fact, I want to argue, this is not the

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\*See A:159 for a list of the main principles that have to do with moral character. All of them are principles of uprightness and honesty, e.g., not to dissemble, not to lie, etc.

<sup>10</sup>While Kant classifies the sanguine and the melancholy temperaments under "temperaments of feeling," while the choleric and phlegmatic temperaments are "temperaments of activity," each category includes dispositions to both feel and act in certain ways. The ancient quadripartite division of temperaments into sanguine, melancholy, choleric and phlegmatic can also be found in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764), where Kant describes them in a way which is slightly different but on the whole consistent with the present.

case, since one can change one's sensuous character through one's way of thinking.

In Chapter 1, I argued that the subjective side of moral improvement involves strengthening emotions favorable to the adoption of moral maxims and weakening those opposed to the same. The successful result of this process is what Kant calls "virtue as strength of will," a capacity measured by the magnitude of the obstacles (in the form of recalcitrant inclinations) it can overcome (DV:394). I now want to apply this model of moral improvement to the case of individual character. I want to argue that knowledge of one's sensuous character is a precondition for moral improvement because one's sensuous character holds the key to one's own particular strengths and weaknesses, an awareness of which helps increase the probability that one will adopt the right maxims and act from the right motives. Knowing and improving one's sensuous character is in this sense instrumental to developing a moral character.

In Part VI, I shall use two of Kant's four temperaments as case studies of various types of individual character, each with its specific strengths and weaknesses, in order to illustrate the ways in which one can cultivate one's sensuous character for the sake of moral ends. Here, I give the argument which must undergird such a case study--namely, showing why, given Kant's sharp distinction between moral

and sensuous character, a knowledge of the latter is at all relevant to the cultivation of the former.

To cultivate a moral character is, of course, morally incumbent on us, and it is helpful to begin with a consideration of this duty. The duty to increase one's moral perfection has two components: 1) ensuring that one's motive is pure, that is, ensuring that the law alone is one's incentive; and 2) fulfilling all one's duties--adopting and acting on the right maxims--and "attaining completely one's moral end with regard to oneself" (DV:446). (The quoted part of (2) presumably refers to our duties toward ourselves, but since Kant strongly suggests that all our duties are really duties towards ourselves (LE:121, 223), we can extend Kant's meaning here to encompass the fulfillment of all our duties.)

Suppose, then, that we have chosen the end of moral perfection. If we rationally intend an end, we are required not only to choose it but also to seek to realize it through action. When our end is one of the two obligatory ends--our own perfection and other people's happiness--certain complications arise. If we were purely rational beings, we would have no problem realizing these ends: we would only have to intend them and we would always act to realize them. But we are finite rational beings, beings who are often tempted to violate moral requirements. For that reason, Kant stresses that the although the duty to increase our



moral perfection is "narrow and perfect in terms of its quality"--that is, in terms of what it prescribes--it can only be "wide and imperfect in terms of its degree, because of the frailty (fragilitas) of human nature" (DV:446).

Human beings are frail because although we may intend to act on the right maxims, we often fail to carry out this intention in practice:

The frailty of human nature is expressed even in the complaint of an Apostle, "What I would, that I do not!" In other words, I adopt the good (the law) into the maxim of my will, but this good, which objectively, in its ideal conception...is an irresistible incentive, is subjectively (in hypothesi), when the maxim is to be followed, the weaker (in comparison with inclination) (R:24-5).

It is because we have inclinations opposed to the law that we often fail to do what we in all earnest intend to do; and since we can never completely rid ourselves of such inclinations, morality requires us to fight those emotional dispositions which tempt us to violate our duties and to cultivate those which can help us fulfill them. Our compliance with the duty to increase our moral perfection can therefore "consist only in continual progress" (DV:446). It is thus not reaching moral perfection which is our duty, but only striving for it (DV:446).

One might ask how this conception of moral improvement as a gradual process can harmonize with the equally prevalent Kantian conception of moral improvement as a rebirth--a rejection of one's previous, corrupt way of thinking and a simultaneous adoption of a steadfast sense of principle. The latter model of moral improvement is prevalent in the Religion, where Kant characterizes it as a "revolution" in one's cast of mind (R:43). It is also found in the following passage from the Anthropology, where Kant seems to be making an outright rejection of any view of moral improvement as a gradual process:

Since the act of establishing character, like a kind of rebirth, is a certain ceremony of making a vow to oneself, we may also assume that the solemnity of the act makes it and the moment when the transformation took place unforgettable to him, like the beginning of a new epoch. Education, examples and instruction cannot produce this firmness and steadfastness in our principles gradually, but only, as it were, by an explosion that results from our being sick and tired of the precarious state of instinct.... Wanting to become a better man in a fragmentary way is a futile endeavor, since one impression dies out while we are working on another; the act of establishing character, however, is absolute unity of the inner principle of conduct generally (A:159).

If the act of establishing moral character takes place through an absolute transformation of one's cast of mind, how can one's compliance with the duty to perfect oneself morally "consist only in continual progress" (DV:446)?

The solution to this antinomy lies, characteristically for Kant, in the distinction between one's intelligible and one's sensible character. Consider his solution to the closely related problem of how a man can be under duty to make himself good when he is "corrupt in the very ground of his maxims" and will, moreover, always have inclinations which oppose the law:

But if a man is corrupt in the very ground of his maxims, how can he possibly bring about this revolution by his own powers and by himself become a good man? Yet duty bids us do this, and duty demands nothing of us which we cannot do. There is no reconciliation possible here except by saying that man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of, a revolution in his cast of mind, but only of a gradual reform in his sensuous nature (which places obstacles in the way of the former). That is, if a man reverses, by a single unchangeable decision, that highest ground of his maxims whereby he was an evil man (and thus puts on a new man), he is, so far as his principle and cast of mind are concerned, a subject susceptible of goodness,

but only in continuous labor and growth is he a good man (R:43, emphases mine).

What becomes clear here is that although good character may be indicated by the presence of the firm resolution to make oneself good (an intention signalled by a revolution in one's cast of mind), the actual realization of this intention--that is, the process of actually becoming good--can only consist in a gradual reform of one's sensuous character. The "gradual" and "absolute" conceptions of moral improvement are thus not really at odds; they only show the difference between intention and action.<sup>11</sup>

Striving for moral perfection thus involves a gradual reform of our sensuous character. This process has both a positive and a negative side: it involves both strengthening our disposition to act dutifully and from duty, and weakening our disposition to act against duty and from

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<sup>11</sup>It should be noted, however, that since willing is the same as intending to act, the concept of good willing contains analytically the concept of striving to act in certain ways. The objective condition of a good will, reflected in the vow to be a good person, is therefore not a static condition but rather a dynamic striving. Our efforts to cultivate our natural feelings, as efforts directed at the realization of the two obligatory ends, have moral worth because they are the manifestation of this striving of the good will. However, when we promote those ends from natural feelings alone, without the thought of the obligatory nature of the act, our action has no moral worth. Qua instance of fulfilling obligatory ends the act might have moral worth, as it may qua instance of cultivating morally beneficial feelings; but since the thought of duty is, ex hypothesi, absent from our minds in instances of this sort, promoting obligatory ends and the means for realizing them cannot be the intention in actions done from feeling alone. Thus, actions done without an explicit concern for duty (for the morality of the act) can have no moral worth.

impure motives. On the side of action, this involves disposing ourselves to adopt and act on the right maxims , and fighting dispositions which make us stray. For example, a person may have a tendency to forget appointments not because she wants to, but because she gets absorbed in conversation with others. Moral progress, for this person, will consist partly in avoiding social situations which are likely to make her forget her appointments.

As regards the purity of our motives, moral improvement involves striving to make duty alone the motive from which we act--a process which involves strengthening the motive of duty not just by reflecting on the moral law but also by cultivating the "moral" feelings which stem from our awareness of the law (a process I will consider in greater detail in Section IV of this chapter and in Chapter 5)--but also making an effort to strengthen their natural counterparts and to weaken morally harmful feelings. This change of feelings will be accompanied by a change of attitudes towards their objects, since feelings have both a sensible and a reflective component. A person may have a disposition to help others not because it is her duty to do so but because she enjoys feeling that they need her. To weaken this arrogant motive, she might, just once, refrain from helping someone so as to prove to herself that others actually do quite well on their own. Or she might reflect on why she needs to feel needed and discover that it is not

so much arrogance as low self-esteem that is motivating her. If so, she needs to take steps to strengthen her self-respect.

In Sections IV and V, I will describe in greater detail the process of moral improvement through reform of our sensuous character, paying particular attention to how cultivating our emotional strengths might help us purify our moral motives. I will also emphasize that cultivating our dignity-feelings enables us to act on our characteristic emotions in a way which harmonizes with moral requirements, and in this sense helps us cultivate virtuous character in a way which is sensitive to our individual temperaments.

Here, I hope at least to have shown that knowing our own strengths and weaknesses is a precondition for moral improvement. Only with a conception of ourselves as unique persons with specific emotional tendencies, often quite different from anybody else's, can we shape our emotional tendencies according to the idea of the persons we ought to be. Since these emotional tendencies belong to our sensuous character, it should be clear that knowing our sensuous character is a precondition for developing good character in the moral sense and is therefore a moral requirement, for Kant. By perfecting and refining the sensuous dispositions which can help us realize moral ends, we make moral progress. Knowing and cultivating our sensuous character is therefore instrumental to virtue itself.

Having established the relevance of individual character to establishing moral character, I now turn to a feature of our sensible life which is important for self-knowledge and for establishing ways in which we need to change ourselves, namely, the workings of conscience.

### Section III: The Workings of Conscience

Among the internal voices dissuading us from deceiving ourselves about our moral standing, conscience is the most powerful. While conscience might appear to be a capacity of thought and not of feeling, Kant classifies it among the "natural predispositions of the mind (praedispositio) for being affected by concepts of duty, antecedent predispositions on the side of feeling" (DV:399). Conscience is thus, at least for Kant, a capacity of feeling. And it fits the model of distinctively moral feelings which I gave in the Introduction and in Chapter 1: it is, at least in its healthy state, conditioned by an awareness of the moral law and by moral judgments, but still falls under the category of feeling because it signifies the sensible effect which such judgments have on us.

I have already observed that the pride appropriate to our dignity is limited only by humility before the moral law. This humility is not meant to make us dejected, but is

rather supposed to make us strive to conform to our moral requirements. Conscience, in its awe-inspiring presence, has a similar function. Kant defines conscience as "consciousness of an internal court in man ('before which his thoughts accuse or excuse one another')" (DV:438). Conscience is reason's judgment applied to one's own actions, yielding a verdict of either "guilty" or "innocent." This judging activity is something we cannot escape; we can only bring ourselves (in conditions of extreme depravity) no longer to heed it (DV:438). Since conscience is inescapable, it inspires awe in us:

Every man has a conscience and finds himself observed, threatened, and, in general, kept in awe (respect coupled with fear) by an internal judge; and this authority watching over the law in him is not something that he himself (voluntarily) makes, but something incorporated into his being. It follows him like a shadow when he plans to escape. (DV:438)

Conscience is thus not strictly a feeling. It is rather an activity of judgment bound up with the feeling of awe (fear coupled with respect) and followed by either relief or pain, depending on whether the verdict was "innocent" or "guilty" (DV:440). The fact that the judgments of conscience are bound up with the feeling of awe and in particular with relief or pain is the reason why Kant classifies conscience among our capacities for feeling: "He who has no immediate



loathing for what is morally wicked, and finds no pleasure in what is morally good, has no moral feeling, and such a man has no conscience" (LE:130).

Since conscience is something we cannot escape but can only dull our senses to, we do not have a duty to acquire a conscience; we only have a duty to cultivate it. We do this by heeding its verdicts, by sharpening our attentiveness to its voice, and by enlightening our understanding about what is and what is not our duty--in short, by using "every means to obtain a hearing for [the voice of conscience]" (DV:401, my insertion).

Kant does not explain why heeding one's conscience is a duty to oneself (though he classifies it as such a duty at DV:437), but I think it is plausible to see this duty as bound up with the duty to know oneself, which is the "first command of all duties to oneself" and tells us: "know your heart--whether it is good or evil, whether the source of our actions is pure or impure, and what can be imputed to you as belonging originally to the substance of man or as derived (acquired or developed) and belonging to your moral condition" (DV:441). For conscience judges not only the legality of our actions, but also their morality (LE:69-72). We have a bad conscience if someone interprets us as genuinely meaning to help him when in fact we are acting from a self-serving motive. Similarly, if we plan to act in a certain way, conscience judges the morality of our maxims

long before we undertake the action (DV:438). Since our conscience can inform us about our long-standing motivations, heeding our conscience is an important aspect of self-knowledge.

But heeding one's conscience is not always a means to self-knowledge; it can also become an instrument of self-deception. Even though a just conscience is veridical, it can become corrupted by false principles, e.g., by the principle to hold oneself to standards more lenient than those to which one holds others (LE:132)<sup>12</sup>. If we think of our conscience as a court of law in which the accused (our full-blooded, sensuo-rational self) is granted a defender (the voice of the inclinations, supported by instrumental reason in the form of the principle of self-love), which upholds her case before the judge, reason, and before the prosecutor, the moral law in all its purity (LE:132; DV:439n), we see that it is easy--human, all too human--to give a more careful ear to the defender than to the prosecutor. As Kant puts it: "Except on the death-bed,

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<sup>12</sup>It is a bewildering fact that in the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant calls an erring conscience "an absurdity" (DV:401), whereas in the Lectures on Ethics, he considers a corrupt conscience to be even more common than a just one (LE:132). In the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant seems to forget his earlier and wiser claim that one's conscience can be corrupted, holding the more simplistic position that although one can be mistaken about what one's duty is, one can never be mistaken about whether one has submitted one's action to the judgment of one's conscience, which he equates, without further question, with practical reason (DV:401). In the latter claim, he seems to be presupposing that the judgment of conscience will be not only veridical but also just. But as we shall see, this is not always the case.

when they listen more eagerly to the accuser, men lend a readier ear to their defender" (LE:132). Anyone imagining herself in a real court of law would probably agree with this claim, as would anyone--and that includes most of us--who has suffered the pangs of a guilty conscience. The defender, who is after all a part of the court of law which constitutes conscience, gets the better hearing and we conclude that the prosecutor is being too hard. Self-deception is often the result: either we deceive ourselves about our own powers, thinking we have lived up to the standards of the moral law when in fact we haven't (in which case we are guilty of self-conceit, the belief that we can actually live up to the absolute purity of the moral law; LE:128), or else we judge by a false standard, a garbled substitute for the moral law (in which case we are guilty of self-love, of making ourselves an exception to the rule; LE:132, 137). By expounding a false law--an a priori law which is to our own advantage or an empirical law which is false to the facts of human nature (in particular, to human frailty)--we corrupt our conscience.

Thus begins the form of self-deception which is called self-flattery. But there is another form of self-deception to which conscience is prone, embodied in what Kant calls a "tyrannical" or "melancholy" conscience. While the self-flattering conscience is underactive--insufficiently meticulous about the difficulty of living up to the moral

law--the tyrannical conscience is overactive, blaming the agent for having failed to do her duty even when she has done everything that could rationally be expected of her. Such a conscience becomes a tormentor:

If a person is capable of reproaching himself for his sins, his conscience is said to be alive; but on the other hand, if a man searches needlessly for evidences of evil in his conduct, his conscience is melancholy. Conscience should not lord it over us like a tyrant; we do no hurt to our conscience by proceeding on our way cheerfully; tormenting consciences in the long run become dulled and ultimately cease to function (LE:134-5).<sup>13</sup>

In a sense, a tyrannical conscience is more dangerous than an underactive conscience. For even though the uncritical conscience is corrupt in that it employs a distorted conception of the agent's powers and of the moral law, it is still capable of being purified because it is still working. A tyrannical conscience, by contrast, is capable of destroying itself: by being too active, it dulls itself and, like a worn-out spring, "ultimately ceases to function."

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<sup>13</sup>A conscience is also overactive when it is employed "to resolve problems of a quibbling nature" (LE:134). Such a conscience, which Kant calls "micrological," should be distinguished from the tyrannical conscience because the latter compares our actions with the moral law, while the micrological conscience quibbles about issues which are morally irrelevant, e.g., "whether it is right to tell a lie in order to make an April fool of a person, or whether a rite or ceremony should be performed in this or that manner" (LE:134).

Striving to be moral can thus become a harmful obsession. But how can we avoid it? The danger of acquiring a tyrannical conscience is alive in anyone who strives to live with a sense of honor. For how does one know whether one is searching "needlessly" for evidences of evil in one's conduct? The duty to know ourselves tells us to examine ourselves scrupulously; hence all efforts to examine our conduct are needful (DV:441-2; LE:128).

To keep our conscience from becoming a tormentor, it seems we have to restrain it. But it is hard to see how it is even possible to restrain it, since conscience is an "instinct" which passes judgment on us "against our will" (LE:129; cf. 69, 131). This means that conscience will condemn us, quite beyond our control, not only for acting immorally, but also for failing to act on the right motives. A tyrannical conscience seizes onto such signs of moral failure and haunts us, creating a weary, melancholy disposition. Since acting on morally inappropriate ways and on inappropriate motives is something we are all prone to by virtue of being human, how do we avoid chronic depression?<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Barbara Herman's "Rules of Moral Salience," which are designed to help us determine which features of situations are morally salient and so call for moral judgment, do not really help here. Although they help prevent what Kant calls a "micrological" conscience (one which sees its path strewn with duties even in morally irrelevant situations), they are of no help in morally salient situations, in which it is up to us to judge when we have done enough of what duty called for. It is precisely here that the threat of a tyrannical conscience arises. See Herman, "The Practice of Moral Judgment."

It might be thought that since Kant characterizes the tyrannical conscience as one which "searches needlessly for evidences of evil in [a man's] conduct" (LE:134, my emphasis), it is primarily concerned with actions and not with motives, and that the way to avoid such a conscience is simply to stop acting against the law and stop fretting about our motives. If we fulfill this minimum of what can reasonably be expected of a finite agent who adopts morality as an end--if we avoid lying, cultivate some of our talents, help others sometimes, and treat them with respect--then surely conscience would stay out of the main part of our day-to-day business.

But this handy solution miscarries when tested against the facts of human nature--in particular, against facts about the ways in which we acquire a bad conscience. Most of us have emotional ties to other people, and some of those ties are stronger than others. It is with respect to these strong emotional ties that the need to attend to our motives becomes especially pressing. We all have a propensity to find faults in others--including our friends. Now while it is impertinent to point out a friend's faults to her, since she needs only examine herself to become aware of them on her own (LE:232), we still cannot help noticing them. And it is the very fact that we notice her faults that raises a problem about our motives. Consider a somewhat neurotic friend who is often complaining about how others victimize

her. We feel like telling her to stop seeing herself as a victim or to stop being servile; but as friends, we do the friendly thing and lend a sympathetic ear, showing we respect her feelings. But in fact we neither respect these particular feelings nor have sympathy for her in this regard. We are merely feigning love and respect, and this false display of affection gives us a bad conscience. Conscience is here condemning us not for our actions but for our motives: we feel guilty for not feeling respect and sympathy for her. One can imagine how a tyrannical conscience might develop in response to situations like this--situations in which there is a dissonance between what we feel and what we do.

The indeterminate nature of imperfect duties also opens up contexts in which a tyrannical conscience might develop. In these contexts, conscience blames us not so much for our motives as for our failure to act in certain ways. Take, first, the duty to promote the happiness of others. Morality tells us that as long as we have the basic maxim to help other people sometimes, we will not incur guilt for failing to promote the ends of others on a particular occasion.<sup>15</sup> But the fact is that many of us do feel guilty when we decline a request for help--especially when

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<sup>15</sup>For a helpful discussion of the nature of imperfect duties and their relation to merit and demerit in Kant, see Thomas Hill, Jr.'s "Kant on Imperfect Duty and Supererogation," Dignity and Practical Reason (Cornell UP, 1992), pp.145-175, esp. pp.160-168.

we do not have to go out of our way to help the other party. That we have the intention to help others sometimes does not make things better, since repeated failure to help makes us doubt whether we have the intention at all. Isolated helping actions begin to seem like token gestures designed to keep our conscience at bay. But the tyrannical conscience does not let itself be so easily fooled. Although such a conscience is misinformed about the requirements of morality, it still remains tyrannical, and it is not clear what we can do to allay it.

Similarly, feeling that we are not complying with the imperfect duty to increase our natural perfection--our mental, physical and pragmatic capacities--can lead to a tyrannical conscience. Kant stresses that deciding which particular talents to develop is left for man himself to choose "in accordance with his own rational reflection about what sort of life he would like to lead and whether he has the powers necessary for it (e.g., whether it should be trade, commerce, or a learned profession)" (DV:445). But finding out what those talents are is often a painstaking and embarrassing process. Anyone who has undergone formal training in anything (music, sports, academics) can vouch for this. Sometimes we cultivate "talents" we don't actually have, and the fear of going through further embarrassments of this sort can keep us from cultivating the talents we do have. Finally, even when we do have a talent



for something, the process of cultivating it requires the courage to risk failure and rejection by going to auditions, applying for competitive jobs, etc. The fear of failure can keep us from challenging ourselves in these ways, and the self-condemnation which arises in response to such inaction sows the seeds of a tyrannical conscience.

How, given these facts about how we get a bad conscience, do we keep our conscience from becoming tyrannical when it is at bottom an "instinct" which passes judgment on us "against our will" (LE:129; cf. 69, 131)? Kant has no ready answer, and I don't think there is a completely satisfactory solution available to him, but I will offer a few suggestions of my own, drawing on what Kant has to say about the "operative" conscience--the conscience which has the strength and authority to translate its guilty verdicts into redemptive action. The verdict of the operative conscience "has validity if it is felt and enforced." A guilty verdict is felt if it issues in moral repentance; it is enforced if it leads to "action in accordance with the judicial verdict" (LE:131, my emphases). In order to act on the guilty verdict, i.e., "to give effect to the valid judgment," a conscience "must be strong and command respect" (LE:132, my emphasis). That is, the feeling of guilt and moral repentance incurred through moral failure must be strong enough to translate itself into a preparedness to act, and to act in a way which demonstrates

that one is no longer choosing to act in on the maxim that conscience condemned at the outset. For instance, if one is guilty of lying, one has to refrain from lying in the future. By refraining from repeating one's offenses, one clears one's conscience step by step.

In the case of redeeming ourselves for acting on the wrong maxims, what we need to do is clear: if guilty of lying, fail to lie in the future, and so on. But what do we do when our conscience condemns us for having the wrong motives--that is, for being unable to act on respect for the moral law? Readers familiar with Kant's doctrine of the inscrutability of motives must be scratching their heads. For I've been speaking of maxims and motives as if they are transparent to the agent--as if they are fully expressed in the conscious thought processes that issue in and accompany our actions. But Kant does not believe that our maxims are that clear to us. At least our motives, which are second-order components of our maxims,<sup>16</sup> are hidden from us; so even if we can formulate the rest of our maxim (our end and the means through which we intend to realize it) fairly clearly, we are still missing a crucial part, namely, our motive for intending to act that way:

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<sup>16</sup>See footnote 15 for a defense of my interpretation of a motive as a second-order clause of the agent's maxim, and for a rejection of the commonly held view that a motive can be thought of as the end of an action, signified by the (first-order) purposive clause of a maxim.

For a man cannot see into the depths of his heart so as to be quite certain, in even a single action, of the purity of his moral intention and the sincerity of his disposition, even when he has no doubt about the legality of his action. (DV:392; see also DV:447 and G:406-8)

Kant's thesis of the inscrutability of motives, and his own motivation for holding it, has led to some puzzlement. It is frequently linked to his (equally puzzling and, in the eyes of many, wildly implausible) doctrine of transcendental freedom of the will (Willkür) which is the capacity of the human will to be a first cause (also called "spontaneity"). The reason why many link these two doctrines together is that they both involve claims to unknowability. In the case of transcendental freedom, the free will exists in the unknowable noumenal world, not in the knowable phenomenal world; consequently, we can have no theoretical or speculative knowledge of the operation of our will and our noumenal choices. Similarly, the inscrutability thesis implies that we cannot know our real motives or maxims.

But since searching one's heart is a practical rather than a theoretical inquiry and spontaneity is barred from theoretical inquiry (while from a practical point of view, it is a necessary part of our conception of ourselves as

rational agents; see G:448; CPrR:28-29),<sup>17</sup> it is unlikely that Kant saw the inscrutability of our motives as a result of his transcendental idealism. The inscrutability thesis is meant to spur us along the road to self-knowledge and so plays a distinctively moral role.

The doctrine of the inscrutability of motives, though certainly undergirded by the doctrine of transcendental freedom, is not just the upshot of a bewildering metaphysical requirement. It is designed to remind us of the ever-present possibility of self-deception and of the fact that virtue and its first command, self-knowledge, are difficult for finite beings such as ourselves. Because of

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<sup>17</sup>In this sense, searching one's heart is a practical rather than a theoretical inquiry, and the command "Know thyself!" urges us to know oneself in a practical rather than theoretical sense (to have Wissen as opposed to Erkenntnis of oneself). But what is practical knowledge with regard to oneself if we experience our individual selves only in space and time and hence only empirically? How can we come to know our empirical selves--in which, after all, most of our motives originate--other than theoretically? Kant does speak of practical knowledge (Wissen) in the Critique of Practical Reason, where he says that the fact of reason, i.e., our awareness of the moral law, enables us to "know [wissen] something of [the intelligible world], namely a law" (CPrR:43, my emphasis and inserts. For other mentions of practical knowledge, embodied in our awareness of the moral law and the Ideas of reason, see CPrR:29, 31, and 137). Since our inquiry into our own motives uses the moral law as a standard according to which we evaluate ourselves (DV:436) and the moral law is an object of practical knowledge, it may seem appropriate, after all, to speak of practical knowledge of our motives. But knowledge is a matter of certainty, and certainty attaches only to items of pure reason (that is why the moral law and its necessity are objects of practical knowledge). Since we have no certainty about our own motives, even though they are often empirically based, I think it is more appropriate to speak of practical inquiry into our motives--inquiry guided by the ever-present standard of the moral law--rather than of practical knowledge of them.

the devilish ways in which self-interest hides its tracks, there always exists a possibility that we are deceiving ourselves about our true motives. Moreover, if we could be certain about our motives, we would grow either complacent or dejected (complacent if they were always pure; dejected if they were impure--most likely, of course, the latter). The inscrutability thesis is designed to underscore the difficulty of knowing ourselves yet to encourage us in our struggle for moral improvement.<sup>1\*</sup>

The Greeks spoke of fate in this context. In his Poetics, Aristotle observes that tragedy has a moral relevance, namely, to remind us that our lives are affected by fate, by accidental circumstance. This is not a harsh doctrine of predestination; it is rather a salubrious reminder that even if we are enjoying happiness at the present moment, circumstances may change; and that consequently, we must not contentedly gloat in our present well-being, but should keep a sharp eye--sharpened judgment of the sort embodied in the Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom (phronesis)--on our condition, so as to be able to take every possible measure to steer away from misfortune (including vice--a significant component of unhappiness, in Aristotle's eyes). Aristotle's lesson in the Poetics can thus be captured by the following motto: "Do what you can to

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<sup>1\*</sup>See Book 1 of the Religion, esp.R:32-4 for an in-depth discussion of how self-interest leads to self-deception.

avoid all obstacles to happiness." A far cry from a doctrine of predestination, Aristotle's thought in the Poetics enjoins us to do whatever is in our power to achieve and maintain happiness.

Kant, dissatisfied with the ambiguity of the Greek term "happiness" (eudaimonia, which can mean physical, mental, as well as moral well-being), replaces "happiness" with "virtue" in Aristotle's motto, and the result is his doctrine of the inscrutability of motives. Instead of reminding us of the power of fate, Kant's doctrine reminds us of the power of opposing inclinations: however sure we may be that we have acted morally, we can never be completely certain, since we may in fact have acted on a maxim of self-love (DV:392-3).

What is interesting here is not so much the attitude itself as the course of action it brings about. Like Aristotle's doctrine in the Poetics, which does not ask us to give up in the face of fate but prompts us to do what we can to avoid situations that could bring unhappiness, Kant's doctrine of the inscrutability of motives does not call for an abject surrender to forces too powerful to overcome, but asks us to use what is in our reach to find out, as best we can, what our true motives are, and to strive with all our might to make the thought of duty our motivating thought in every action (DV:393). The fact that we cannot be absolutely sure of our motives does not entail that we

cannot increase the likelihood that our motives will be virtuous or at least compatible with virtue. This takes work, but it is not an impossible task.<sup>19</sup>

Paying unfailing heed to the judgments of our conscience is perhaps the most powerful way to combat our tendency to deceive ourselves. As Kant himself observes, having a peaceful conscience is not necessarily the same as being virtuous: people whose actions conformed to duty externally might have a peaceful conscience as a result, even though they "did not take the law into their counsel" and merely happened upon the right action by luck (R:33). The virtuous person is not satisfied with mere legality; she is concerned about the morality of her actions and wants to act for the right reasons. As I have already observed, she has a bad conscience not only when she suspects that in helping someone perhaps she didn't act from benevolence but from self-interested vanity (a love of being loved), but

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<sup>19</sup>My claim that the inscrutability thesis is intended primarily as a reminder of the strength of non-moral motives --a reminder designed to prompt us to strive for purity in our motives--finds support in Kant's explicit and repeated connection of human frailty (our tendency to act on non-moral motives) with our inability ever to know whether we have acted from a pure motive (DV:392-3, 446-7). Were our motives transparent to us, we might easily be lulled into self-flattery and moral complacency--vices which Kant repeatedly warns us against (DV:430, 436; CPrR:85). But because our motives are inscrutable to us, we are instead set on the course to continually strive to make ourselves morally better. It is for this reason that I take the inscrutability thesis to be essentially linked up with human frailty--with the fact that we are always tempted to break the law--and to be designed primarily to make us strive for moral improvement.

also when she fails to have the right feelings toward someone. The morally concerned agent is acutely aware of the voice of her conscience, which is perhaps only rarely peaceful.

Searching one's conscience involves asking oneself questions of the following sort: "Did I publically reveal a shameful secret about this person because I was drunk and reckless, or did I do it out of an illegitimate sense of moral superiority which I have cultivated through demeaning people in the past?"; "Did I leave this man, causing his unhappiness, because I am in the grip of passion for someone else, or did I really try to make it work, but we simply aren't suited for one another--and is this a moral matter at all?"; "Is it a moral failure on my part not to practice my painting more, or is it a permissible negligence because I am cultivating other talents at this time? If the latter, then why do I still have a bad conscience for not painting more--is it because I am setting the goal of my own perfection too high or because I am really robbing myself of an occasion for self-realization? And what would the motive for the latter be, anyway: vanity or self-perfection?"; and so on. Sometimes, both candidate motives can be vicious (e.g., in the case of drunkenly betraying someone's confidence, in which excessive drunkenness and betrayal of confidence are both vices); other times, only one is; still other times, neither. It is important to try to pinpoint



the operative motive(s) as exactly as possible because only then do we know which inclinations, if any, need to be changed. Conscience can thus guide us in determining whether a given inclination or character-trait reflects a moral failure.

As regards our emotions--which are after all our deepest and strongest motives for acting or failing to act--we need to show ourselves--the primary judges of what goes on inside us--that we are taking steps to fight the emotions which prohibit us from satisfying the demands of morality. To do this, we need to prove to ourselves that we are strengthening the feelings which might be able to counteract those which our conscience condemns. In the case of the fear of failure or embarrassment which prevents us from cultivating certain talents, for example, we need to cultivate courage. Building courage in one context helps us act courageously in others, and even though we might be unable to summon courage in one context--we might be too afraid, say, to audition for a band or play even when we think we have the requisite talent--we could build on our predispositions to courage (fearlessness in the face of risk) in other contexts--say, by being more daring in our social lives--to help us face embarrassment in the former context.

But how, exactly, do we "build on" or "cultivate" our predispositions on the side of feeling? I now turn to this

question, paying particular attention to what is to .  
cultivate our feelings according to the idea of our dignity.

#### Section IV: Cultivating Feeling: A Definition

Although Kant often speaks of the need to our feelings according to moral ideas, he never actually explains what the process involves. Accordingly, I will give a definition of my own with which I believe Kant would be sympathetic. To cultivate a feeling according to the idea of one's own dignity and the dignity of others, I suggest, is a bipartite process the first part of which involves sharpening one's judgment about the feeling; the second, refining the feeling itself. One sharpens one's judgment about the feeling for two purposes: first, so that one can make responsible and authentic decisions about whether to act on the feeling; and, second, so that when one does choose to act on it, one can do so in a way which is dignified and which harmonizes with one's sense of moral integrity. One refines the feeling for the purpose of bringing it closer to one's moral feelings--that is, to one's love of man, one's self-respect, one's conscience, and one's respect for the moral law. In what follows, I will clarify each part of this definition.

The first part of my definition of cultivating feeling--the part about sharpening our judgment about (and

perception of) our feelings and the way they figure in our character--may strike the reader as an odd component in a definition of cultivating feeling. For isn't it judgment and not feeling that we are talking about here? On Kant's theory of action, it is natural to assign a task to judgment whenever one speaks of changing oneself in some way. For Kant, all human action, including self-change, is mediated by judgment. Acting on a particular feeling, on this theory, is equivalent to acting on the judgment that this feeling is suitable (suitable in some sense--not necessarily morally) to act on in this situation.

Although we may feel as if we are acting directly on our feelings, we implicitly take responsibility for acting in this manner by intending, however unself-consciously, to act on the feeling and so being prepared to justify our actions (or at least explain them) if needed. We need not approve of the way in which we are acting; nevertheless, we implicitly take responsibility for acting that way through our choice to act on that particular feeling. This decision and simultaneous assumption of responsibility is an act of judgment, reflected in the maxim or personal principle on which we act. Acting on a feeling is thus always accompanied by an awareness of choosing to act on it and also being prepared to defend or explain one's action.

When we are acting with a view to changing ourselves--in this case, with a view to moral improvement--the judgment

we make with regard to a particular feeling must take a special form. We must not only take responsibility for acting on the feeling, but must also endorse it as a feeling which is morally beneficial. Whether a given feeling is morally beneficial or not depends on the way it figures in our own particular character. Some people have a propensity to be overly sentimental; others a propensity to be choleric; others to be overly fearful, to feel attacked by or afraid of certain individuals and to let this dominate their consciousness and behavior. A gruff sea captain may benefit from a dose of sympathy; a bleeding heart from a dose of pride. If one knows one's own weaknesses in terms of acting on feelings--that is, if one knows which feelings tend to overtake one's personality and to affect one's behavior in a morally harmful way (whether harmful to others or to one's own dignity)--one is better able to curb them and to cultivate feelings which can "compensate" for those weaknesses.

A feeling is bad for oneself to act on when it undermines or fails to contribute to one's own perfection, moral worth, or social grace--in short, to one's dignity. For instance, people who are sentimental can express their sentimentality in appealing ways, given the right situation. But an inappropriate display of sentimentality--when one displays sentimentality simply because one has a tendency to do so and not because it is the right time to do so--is

always morally harmful because it reveals a presumption to moral superiority. In times of mourning, for instance, a display of pure grief may be legitimate, but never a prolonged, dripping reminiscence of the late one, which betrays pity and therefore disrespect for the latter, since pity is "the kind of benevolence one has toward someone unworthy" (DV:457).

Another feeling that can be morally harmful is humility--even when it is genuine, not false humility. A humble person can be self-effacing to the degree of losing her own self-respect, even when her humility does not necessarily involve the feeling that her own worth is lower than that of others (the latter would be false humility). Such a person needs to curb her humility by cultivating her pride, and she can do so in a number of ways. In being given a compliment she deserves, she should not act on her humble impulse to say, "Oh, it's nothing, really," but should instead smile and say "Thank you." This simple expression of pride in her accomplishment brings with it a greater sense of self-worth, and so cultivates pride and self-respect.

Being able to judge whether a given feeling is good or bad for us to act on thus requires self-knowledge and self-control. Through judgment, we modify our actions by refraining from acting on feelings which are negative to our moral personality and acting on those which are positive.

But we must also affect the feelings themselves, for what we are concerned with, after all, is changing our character; and when it comes to changing our feelings, what we are interested in cultivating are not just episodic emotions, nor just our long-standing dispositions to feel, but the quality and depth of the feelings themselves, so that we can be proud of having these particular feelings as character-traits. As we gain insight into the dangers or virtues of a particular feeling and, more broadly, into the role it plays in our character, we develop an attitude toward it: we either approve or disapprove of it. Our attitude about the feeling affects our disposition to take pleasure in it, and so changes our propensity to indulge in it on specific occasions. By either indulging in it ("riding out" the train of thoughts and emotions which accompany it) or refraining from indulging in it (thinking about something else), we either increase or decrease our likelihood to express the emotion in word or deed. By reflecting on and adopting a certain attitude toward a given feeling, we change our disposition to feel it and hence our proneness to act on it. How this helps deepen the feeling itself is something I will consider in Chapters 4 and 5.

A person whose judgment is sensitive to her feelings is not only able to decide whether to act on a given feeling, but is also able, when she does decide to act on the feeling, to choose a course of action which is dignified,

authentic, and harmonizes with her sense of moral integrity. Judgment, in this capacity, is employed to find an appropriate way of expressing the feeling through words, bodily gestures and facial expressions. Kant has the following to say about facial expressions:

Expression is the facial features put into play, and this play results from an emotional agitation of more or less strength, the tendency to which is one of a man's characteristic traits. It is hard not to betray the stamp of an affect by any expression. It betrays itself by the very pains we take to repress it in our manner and tone; and if a man is too weak to master his affects, the play of his expressions will unmask (against his reason's wishes) what is going on within him, which he would like to hide and withdraw from the eyes of others. But men who are masters of this art, if once detected, are not considered the best sort of men, men with whom we can deal in confidence. This is especially true if they are practiced in affecting expressions that contradict what they do (A:164-5).

Kant makes it clear here that it is morally preferable to show one's struggle with one's emotions than to hide it: people who are able to hide this struggle are not considered trustworthy. It is fairly clear why this is so: concealing one's emotions or one's struggle with them is a mark of dishonesty--a trait which will eventually become known the

world through an inconsistency between one's actions and one's expressions. So it is better to reveal what one is feeling than to hide it, even if what one is feeling is something one is not very proud of. In giving expression to the emotional turbulence within oneself, one is heeding one's sense of honesty and moral integrity.

But Kant also makes it clear, in the paragraph just quoted, that the inability to master one's passions is a sign of weakness. It would seem, then, that the most desirable state to attain with regard to one's emotions is a state in which one does not need to struggle against them--a state in which one is the master of one's emotions. This is certainly suggested in the following passage, already familiar from Chapter 1:

Since virtue is based on inner freedom, it contains a positive command to man, namely to bring all his capacities and inclinations under his (reason's) control and so to rule over himself, which goes beyond forbidding him to let himself be governed by his feelings and inclinations (the duty of apathy); for unless reason holds the reins of government in its own hands, man's feelings and inclinations play the master over him (DV:408).

As I stressed in Chapter 1, for reason to be master over one's feelings and inclinations is for reason to govern them without playing the tyrant (see also DV:407). Because not



all emotions are hostile to reason's moral ends, not all emotions must be fought or suppressed. Only those emotions which are opposed to moral ends must be fought; emotions which are favorable to moral ends are not, in and of themselves, bad; quite on the contrary, Kant considers them to be good (R:51).

All this suggests that mastery over one's emotions is necessary only with regard to those emotions which are morally harmful. The upshot is that we do not need to struggle against all our emotions, but only against those opposed to moral ends; and, moreover, that when we are engaged such a struggle, we should not try to hide it. Since success in this struggle is a strength of will, as measured by the magnitude of obstacles it can overcome (DV:394)--it is nothing we should try to hide, but should instead be proud of. But Kant also stresses that "men should not make a display of their worthiness to be happy" (DV:457), which suggests that it would be morally distasteful to advertise the successful outcome of one's private moral battles. A struggle against recalcitrant emotions, however, does not presume a successful outcome. Giving honest expression to the struggle itself is not in bad moral taste; it is only advertising one's success that is distasteful. Take the person who has an unduly strong sense of humility. If her facial expressions were to reveal her struggle to take a compliment in proud fashion--say, her

saying "Thank you" with a modest smile and averted eyes--we wouldn't take this to be in bad taste. But if she were to tell all her acquaintances about how much better she feels since she regained her self-respect, we would not only find her pathetic but would also come to doubt whether she had actually gained any self-esteem at all (a person sure of her successes does not need to advertise them).

Emotions favorable to moral ends need not be fought, but we do need to ensure that they receive proper expression so that they do not degenerate into emotions which are morally harmful. Proper pride in one's unconditional worth, for example, can degenerate into arrogance, which "demands from others a respect it denies them" (DV:465). This degeneration can take place in a number of ways, but a prominent one involves expressing one's proper pride in a way which is inappropriate--especially when others, due to their politeness, do not let it be shown that this expression is inappropriate. Since this is somewhat abstract, I will make it more concrete--first by considering how Kant himself contrasts proper pride with arrogance, and then by drawing some conclusions of my own concerning the process by which pride might degenerate into arrogance. This will also provide an occasion to discuss the important dignity-feeling of proper pride.

Proper or "noble" pride, or love of honor, as Kant often calls it, consists in "self-esteem; man must not

appear unworthy in his own eyes; his actions must be in keeping with humanity itself if he is to appear in his own eyes worthy of inner respect" (LE:125). In the Lectures on Ethics, he goes so far as to say that love of honor should motivate us in all our actions (LE:191). Since this motivating capacity is merely negative--"it is dictated merely by our desire not to become a object of contempt" (LE:187)--it is not surprising to see Kant, in the Doctrine of Virtue, assigning love of honor the role of helping us avoid the indignities brought upon us by violating our perfect duties to ourselves (e.g., by selling our physical nature, by lying, by being servile, etc.) (DV:420). But it would seem that love of honor alone is not sufficient to make us carry out our imperfect duties, which leave it up to us to decide when and how to fulfill them. Refraining from helping someone at a particular occasion does not bring any great indignity upon us as long as we have the basic maxim to help some people sometimes.<sup>20</sup> We seem therefore to need something more than a desire not to become an object of contempt to motivate us to carry out our imperfect duties. In the Groundwork, perhaps for this reason, motivation by love of honor is supplanted by motivation by respect for the

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<sup>20</sup>Effectively carrying out our duties of love toward others, in particular, might require more than sheer love of honor, even when the latter is taken as a positively motivating feeling: it might require love of man and not love of honor. In Chapter 4, I will show that love of man is indeed part of the motive of duty: it is the way that respect for the moral law manifests itself in the morally mature agent as she carries out her duties of love.

law. But even as late as 1797 (the year that the Doctrine of Virtue was published), love of honor retains the negatively motivating role that Kant originally assigned it. Love of honor is in effect what ensures that we do not compromise our dignity; that we maintain self-respect in our own eyes and do not give up our dignity in comparison with others (DV:465).

But love of honor is not only an internal stance. It is always concerned with one's character before the world at large. Honor, says Kant, is "the goodness of conduct as it appears. It is not enough that our conduct should be good: it must appear as good before the eyes of others" (LE:190, my emphasis). It is therefore not enough merely to fulfill our duties in order to maintain our self-respect; we must also do so in a way which others can approve of. We do so by making ourselves an example for others: "each of us must see to it, not merely that our actions provide a negative example by containing nothing evil, but that they set a positive example by the presence of some real good in them. Our actions must not only be good; they must also be set as examples before the eyes of others" (LE:191).

The question immediately arises as to what Kant means by claiming that our actions must not only contain no evil, but also "some real good." On Kant's mature conception of moral worth, the "real good" which our actions must contain is motivation by duty. But how can we let others know that

our actions are motivated by duty when we cannot show others our motives and they are opaque even to us? The most obvious way to indicate that our actions have moral worth, I suggest (and defend more closely in Section IV), is by going out of our way to fulfill our duties. Helping others in situations where this constitutes an inconvenience for us is one way of showing purity of motive--or at least that we have the right maxim and are prepared to act on it. Another way to indicate purity of motive is to heed our perfect duties--refraining from lying, from treating others with contempt, etc.--in especially noble ways, e.g., by making a difficult confession or by forgiving an enemy whom we would rather treat with contempt. These, then, are ways of making ourselves an example for others.

We are now in a position to consider how a morally valuable emotion can degenerate into a morally harmful one if it does not receive the proper expression. Love of honor can degenerate into lust for honor if we express it in the wrong way--in particular, if we seek to compel the approval of others instead of trusting in our own merits and allowing others to judge them freely (LE:188). Kant characterizes the difference between love of honor (pride proper) and lust for honor (arrogance) as follows:

The lust for honor implies an arrogant demand to be noticed. We never object to the love of honor, but to the lust for honor we do object. The love of honor is

modest, never becoming a lust; it is anxious for the respect of all and to escape contempt. Changed to a lust, it demands uncommon and inordinate honor. To gain the preference of others, the ambitious man sets out to force the judgments of his fellows to his own opinion. But since the judgments of others with respect to ourselves are free, the grounds for respecting us must be such that the judgments of others follow necessarily from them. A man who lusts after honor seeks to compel the judgment of others, by demanding their esteem, and in doing so he makes himself ridiculous. He encroaches upon our rights and drives us to resist him. But the man of honor whose sole desire is to be respected by his fellows, and not to be held in contempt, gains our respect; and the more worthy he is of it and the less arrogant, the more eager we are to respect him (LE:188).

There is a fine line between the proper demand to make oneself an example and the arrogant demand to be noticed. Our eagerness to gain the respect of others must never overtake a respect for the right of others to form free judgments about us. The love of honor demands that we make an example of ourselves, but if we do so in the wrong way, we are flirting with arrogance. If, for example, we tell people who are interested in our accomplishments (e.g., our relatives) about them, we may be living up to our proper

pride, but if we brag about them to everyone, we allow our pride to degenerate into arrogance. It is easy for our love of honor to exceed healthy bounds because others are usually too polite to inform us that we are bragging or that we seem to have too high an opinion of ourselves.

To prevent our love of honor from degenerating into arrogance, we have to express our desire to gain others' respect in the right way. Finding appropriate expression for our feelings is thus one way in which judgment helps us cultivate them and keep them within their proper bounds.

I hope, in this section, to have shed some light on Kant's view of what it is to cultivate one's feelings in accordance with the idea of one's dignity. To do so is, first, to develop an appropriate attitude about the feeling, given one's temperament and one's moral strengths and weaknesses. This involves attuning one's judgement to the workings of the feeling and to how it figures in one's particular character, being especially attentive to ways in which it sways one. It also involves finding appropriate expression for feelings which can be put to a moral use. The latter is not merely a matter of training our judgment and attuning our perception; it is a matter of refining the feeling itself through engaging in society and in culture.

In the next and final section, I will consider two character types sketched by Kant himself, each with different strengths and weaknesses, and will illustrate how

the moral improvement of each character might unfold. These studies will bring home the intensely personal nature of the process of cultivating our feelings with an eye to moral ends. I will also suggest (with a moral-psychological story here and with more detailed textual evidence in Chapter 4) that although the necessity with which duty binds us is always stern and uncompromising, the motive of duty is not always experienced this way. The way in which we, as morally mature agents, fulfill our duties towards ourselves in a morally worthy way (i.e., from the motive of duty) differs from the way in which we would do so as moral novices--that is, as newly converted sinners or as morally inexperienced individuals (e.g., teenagers) who are just embarking on road to self-improvement and who must therefore struggle extensively with their sensible natures. The morally mature individual fulfills her duties toward herself from the reason-based feelings of proper pride, self-respect, and love of honor. Since these feelings are the ways in which the motive of duty manifests itself in the morally experienced individual, acting from these reason-based feelings has moral worth.



## V. Two Studies of Cultivating Feeling

For my studies, I will use two of the four character types which Kant discusses in the section titled "On Temperament" in the Anthropology. I have chosen the sanguine and the melancholy temperaments for this particular study; in Chapter 4, I discuss the choleric and phlegmatic temperaments. Although moral improvement in the latter two temperaments also involves cultivating feeling, the stories I will tell about them are more relevant to our duties toward others than to those toward ourselves; and since the focus of this chapter has been on dignity-feelings (which are helpful primarily, though not exclusively, for fulfilling our duties toward ourselves), I have chosen the two temperaments which need most acutely to cultivate their dignity-feelings, namely, the sanguine and the melancholy.

Kant adopts his classification of temperaments from the ancients, but gives them new descriptions. How are we to think of these temperaments? Do they exhaust the range of human possibilities, or are there others as well? Kant seems to think they represent the only four empirical character types there are, since he claims that "there is no such thing as a composite temperament" and that "if someone claims a mixed one, we do not know what to make of him" (A:156/291). But I think many of us will recognize aspects of ourselves in all of them. Kant may be right about others

not knowing what to make of us in such a case--after all, we often don't know what to make of ourselves!

It is important to note that Kant intends to describe only the sensible aspects of a person's character, whatever their moral implications; and that it is possible for each of these temperaments to develop a moral character (A:151, 154). As we will see, however, the sensible aspects of a person's character have moral implications: Kant takes a person's way of sensing to include her attitude toward her moral strengths and flaws.

Since Kant's descriptions of the temperaments are rich in dramatic value, I quote them in full. I begin by considering the sanguine temperament, which Kant describes as follows:

#### The Sanguine Temperament of the Volatile Man

A sanguine person manifests his way of sensing, and can be recognized, by the following traits: he is carefree and full of hope; he attaches great importance to each thing for the moment, and the next moment may not give it another thought. He makes promises is all honesty, but fails to keep his word because he has not reflected deeply enough beforehand whether he will be able to keep it. He is good-natured enough to help others, but he is a bad debtor and always asks for extensions. He is a good companion, jocular and high-spirited, who is reluctant to take anything seriously (Vive la

bagatelle!) and all men are his friends. He is, as a rule, not a bad fellow; but he is a sinner and hard to convert, who regrets something very much indeed, but soon forgets this regret (which never becomes an affliction). Business wears him out, and yet he busies himself indefatigably with mere play; for play involves change and perseverance is not in his line (A:153-4).

The sanguine character is obviously not the kind to fall prey to a tyrannical conscience, for although he may regret something "very much indeed," his regret "never becomes an affliction." A study of this character type is thus not likely to illustrate the struggle with a tyrannical conscience--but we shall have an abundance of that struggle in our next character type. What is most notable in the sanguine character is his utter disregard for principle. He is not evil, but he fails to see how his earnest ways, juxtaposed with his failure to keep his promises, make others think of him as an unreliable charlatan of low moral fiber. His ways make people lose their respect for him.

When this person finally notices he has lost the respect of others--when he find himself suddenly and inexplicably alone--he will certainly be puzzled by how this came to be. For he does, after all, have the morally beneficial traits of sociability and beneficence. Even if it is only through his sense of humor that he pleases people, he still knows he makes them happy. But why do they

consider him a disposable entertainer? He slowly comes to realize that loving people or their company is not enough to gain their respect: one's deeds must testify to one's love of honor. What this person needs is a sense of pride, a sense of dignity. If he had pride, he would take greater pains to stand by his word, and people would respect him--take him seriously instead of thinking of him as a good-natured charlatan. By cultivating his sense of pride, he comes to understand what it means to live up to the demands of morality: that it is not only something one does because a universal law demands it, but also something one does to preserve one's own dignity.

Since it is unlikely that the sanguine man will be able to bring himself to act from principle right away--his nature isn't that way; he is too swayed by the feeling of the moment--the feeling of pride will make him stand by his word not because it is his duty to do so but because it marks the dignity and unity of character which wins the respect of others. Through pride, he comes to act in accordance with principle. But once he has begun to cultivate his pride, he has already set himself on the course to morally worthy action. For the mode of thought which accompanies pride is conducive to cultivating the motive of duty. In what follows, I will show that by using his moral strengths (notably, his love of others) in

combination with his newly won pride, the sanguine person cultivates the duty-motive.

Clearly not all forms of pride are compatible with the duty motive: arrogance, for instance, leads to immorality because it involves thinking of oneself as more worthy than others--as someone who has the right to make herself an exception to the rule. Proper pride, by contrast, involves feeling one's own unconditional worth and seeing that others also have this worth. Since the sanguine person lacks pride at the outset, he is not likely to develop an arrogant frame of mind. But how does even a sense of proper pride help him cultivate the motive of duty? Proper pride is after all primarily an attitude toward oneself, while the duty motive involves respect for the moral law and for all other moral agents. I suggest that by combining his newly won pride with his natural sociability, the sanguine person begins to cultivate his respect for the moral law. His pride makes him think of himself as an end in himself. His inclination to love others prepares him to put himself in their position and so to think of them, too, as ends in themselves. The result is a strengthened respect for the source of humanity's unconditional worth--for the moral law itself. By thus exploiting his dispositions of feeling, the sanguine

person increases the likelihood that he will act from the motive of duty.<sup>21</sup>

I now turn to the melancholy character, which Kant describes as follows:

The Melancholy Temperament of the Grave Man

A man disposed to melancholy (not one afflicted with melancholia, which is a state and not merely a tendency toward a state) attaches great importance to everything that has to do with himself. He finds grounds for apprehension everywhere and directs his attention first to the difficulties [an undertaking involves], just as the sanguine temperament, on the other hand, takes hope of success as its starting point. So the melancholy temperament thinks deeply, as the sanguine thinks only superficially. Such a man is slow to make promises, for keeping his word is dear to him but he is doubtful whether he can do it. Not that all this takes place from moral grounds (for we are speaking here of sensuous incentives). It is rather that the opposite inconveniences him, and just because of this makes him apprehensive, suspicious and doubtful, and thereby also insusceptible to gaiety. --Moreover, this cast of mind,

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<sup>21</sup>It should be understood that actions from mixed motives--say, from both a feeling of sympathy and respect for the moral law--are morally worthy, since the thought of duty is present among the motivating influences. By strengthening feelings compatible with the duty motive, we train ourselves to think along the lines of duty and so make it more likely that the latter will accompany actions from those feelings.

if it is habitual, conflicts at least in its impulse with a philanthropic disposition, which is rather the lot of the sanguine temperament; for a man who must himself do without joy will find it hard not to begrudge it to others (A:154).

In contrast to the sanguine character, who is courageous to the point of rashness, jumping into situations and promises which he later fails to live up to, the melancholy person lacks the courage required to be generous and to make promises. The effort involved in keeping a promise "inconveniences" him; and since he is at bottom an unsociable character, he would prefer to stay out of dealings with other people altogether.

He has certain dispositions which can be developed into moral strengths. One is his innate apprehensiveness about his own powers, which makes it easy for him--once he has adopted the basic intention to be moral--to reflect on the severity of moral requirements and on the difficulty of living up to them. His problem, of course, is that he lacks the courage and even the desire (because of his dislike for other people) to put any of his reflection into action. He is plagued by "the self-torturer's torment" (A:156), which locks him up in himself and keep him from enjoying the pleasure of other people. He is paralyzed not just by self-doubt but also by a general apathy towards other people.

This man needs courage in order to trust himself enough to begin to take pleasure in life through action and through learning to like other people. It is because he fails to enjoy himself that he begrudges others their pleasure and to feels no responsibility toward them. His failure to enjoy himself probably stems from a combination of fear and a tyrannical conscience. His conscience may be corrupt, judging by false moral principles (e.g., on the standard of whether something constitutes an inconvenience to him), but its main feature is that it is overactive, causing him to brood too much and act too little. His fear of public exposure not only makes him neglect his duties toward others, but probably also makes him neglect his talents, depriving himself of the challenges which constitute one of the greatest pleasures in life (LE:175).

As we saw in Part III, the way to combat a tyrannical conscience is to cultivate the feelings which dispose you to act in ways which redeem the actions (or inaction) through which you incurred your guilt. The feeling which the melancholy person needs to cultivate is courage. Had he the courage to enter society, he would learn to like people and would thus strengthen his love of man. He would also overcome the fear of failure which prevents him from exercising his sense of honor (which is present in him because "keeping his word is dear to him") and from cultivating his talents. There are many ways to cultivate



courage, but the main one is simply learning to face embarrassment. This is certainly a great inconvenience, and it is therefore unlikely that the melancholy man will choose this course of action. But self-torture is also an inconvenience, and the catalyst to self-change in the melancholy man will be his throwing off his self-imposed misery.

In order to embark on the road of moral improvement, the melancholy man must first recognize his self-doubt and lack of concern for others as moral failings. He can do so only by adopting the basic intention to be virtuous. Once he has formed the basic intention to be moral, he can begin to identify the character traits he needs to combat within himself. Given the tyrannical nature of his own conscience (whether corrupt or not), he will readily come to recognize his weaknesses--for which he already condemns himself, whether for the right reasons or not--as moral weaknesses. But intention does not amount to action; and the motive of duty in this newly converted "ex-sinner" may not yet be strong enough to actually move him, in particular situations, to action. That is, the motive of duty may not yet be influential enough within his character for him to choose to act on it rather than on his moral failings. His moral failings--for example, his unfriendly disposition--will lead him to stray from his intention to be virtuous, will lead him to nonbeneficence and neglect of his talents.

Since he already has the power to reflect on his actions and their implications, assessing his character is for him a fairly easy task. A respect for the moral law and an awareness of the difficulty of living up to it are already present in him; what he lacks is the power to put his intentions into action. By using his moral strength--his deep reflective capacities--the melancholy man can become more attentive to ways in which he can take an interest in other people and so cultivate a genuine concern for others, a love of man. He might do so by engaging in friendship and in society. If he is painfully shy, he might have to cultivate his courage, and he might do so by engaging in sports (personally, I've felt more courageous since I started Tae Kwon Do). As I will show in Chapters 4 and 5, friendships and social contexts provide the setting within which we reflect on and begin to cultivate our morally beneficial feelings.

### Conclusion

The overarching theme of this chapter was the sense of dignity required for us to carry out, primarily though not exclusively, our duties toward ourselves. The main dignity-feelings I have discussed are proper pride, love of honor, and courage. I have tried to show how cultivating each of these feelings strengthens our sense of dignity and the

motive of duty itself as it manifests itself in our duties toward ourselves. I have also suggested that these "moral" feelings are powerful tools for cultivating other emotions in accordance with the idea of our dignity: that by combining a given feeling with any of the three dignity-feelings, we cultivate that particular feeling in such a way that it stays within morally proper bounds.

I also discussed the workings of conscience and the problems which arise from the ever-present possibility of developing a tyrannical, overactive conscience. I proposed a solution to the problem: cultivating feelings which counteract the dispositions of which we disapprove helps clear the guilty conscience, insofar as these feelings help us act in ways which rectify the original vice and also insofar as these feelings are accompanied by attitudes which are morally informed.

## Chapter 4:

### Feelings Associated with Our Duties Toward Others

In this chapter, I focus on the feelings associated with our duties toward others. Kant divides these duties into two categories: duties of love (beneficence, gratitude and sympathy) and duties of respect (avoiding arrogance, defamation and ridicule). The chief difference between them is that "no one is wronged if duties of love are neglected; but a failure in the duty of respect infringes upon a man's lawful claim" (DV:464). Putting aside for now the question of why "no one is wronged" when we fail to help, to be grateful or to be sympathetic, I want to consider what, exactly, man's "lawful claim" is.

Seeing others as less worthy than ourselves, defaming them, and ridiculing them are ways of violating the dignity that each person is entitled to--ways of denying them the unconditional worth man is "authorized to put upon himself" as a bearer of humanity (DV:449).<sup>1</sup> That is why a duty of respect is "a duty that is owed" (DV:448): fulfilling it is something we owe other people qua ends-in-themselves. Since a duty of respect is a duty of not encroaching on another person's "lawful claim," it is "analogous to the duty of Right not to encroach upon what belongs to anyone" (DV:449-

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<sup>1</sup>For an explanation of why humanity is an end-in-itself, see Chapter 4, opening pages.

50); the difference between our duties toward others in the Doctrine of Virtue and those in the Doctrine of Right is that the latter can be externally enforced, while fulfilling our duties of respect (all duties of virtue) is largely a matter of developing the proper attitude toward them--an attitude of "not exalting oneself above others" (DV:449).

I will argue that developing a respectful attitude toward others involves cultivating not only feelings of respect toward them but also feelings of love.

Kant claims that love and respect toward others "are the feelings that accompany the carrying out" of our duties toward others (DV:448). Since he divides these duties into duties of love and duties of respect, one might think that love is needed to fulfill our duties of love but not our duties of respect, and respect is needed to fulfill our duties of respect but not our duties of love. However, it becomes clear that Kant thinks love and respect have to work in tandem for us adequately to fulfill these duties. He says, for instance, that we need to "throw the veil of love of man" over people's faults in order to soften our judgments of them and so to avoid the temptation to defame them when it might arise (DV:465). Love and respect, in other words, "accompany" the fulfillment of all our duties toward others.

This claim--that love and respect "accompany" the fulfillment of our duties of love and respect toward others--

-can be interpreted in two ways. We can interpret love and respect as feelings which are instrumental to the performance of these duties. This harmonizes with the account of morally beneficial feelings I've given so far, and Kant clearly does believe that we will be better prepared to fulfill our duties towards others if we cultivate feelings of love and respect toward them. But I shall also show that Kant considers love and respect to be indispensable to the adequate fulfillment of these duties because they enable the duty-motive (reverence for the moral law) to express itself in a direct and heartfelt concern for the dignity and well-being of others. Love and respect, I shall argue, are the ways in which the duty-motive manifests itself in the morally mature agent--the individual who has had the time and occasion to cultivate the proper attitudes toward others through developing her social graces, engaging in culture, etc.

#### I. Beneficence: How Related to Benevolence?

Kant is quick to point out that since we cannot be put under obligation to have feelings, we have no duty to feel love toward others (DV:449). Nevertheless, we have a duty to cultivate feelings of love and sympathy toward others because these feelings help us more effectively carry out

our duties of love (DV:402, 456). The love of mankind which morality requires of us from the outset, however, is not a feeling of love or a pleasure in other people, but rather "the maxim of benevolence (practical love), which results in beneficence" (DV:449, first emphasis mine). Morality requires that we take an interest in others' ends and be willing to help them whenever we are able.

Kant is actually somewhat misleading in claiming that there can be a maxim of benevolence, since maxims are "subjective principles of action" (G:422n) and benevolence is more an inner attitude of well-wishing than an intention to act in certain ways (that is why he contrasts benevolence with beneficence in the first place). When we are benevolent, we take an interest in another person's ends, though not necessarily an active one: it is well for us when things go well for others, even if we are not directly responsible for their well-being (DV:450, cf. 452, 460). While benevolence can issue in beneficence--in actively promoting the ends of the other (DV:450)--it is also possible, from a sense of duty, to do someone a favor whom we neither like nor wish well (DV:402). In other words, it is possible to be beneficent without being benevolent. What, then, is morally required of us--benevolence, beneficence or both?

Beneficence--actively promoting the ends of others, provided these ends are morally permissible--is a duty

(DV:450, 452). In adopting a maxim of beneficence, we resolve to help others through action. But what about benevolence, the attitude of sincerely wishing that it go well for others? Are we required to adopt this inner stance? Kant suggests we are when he says that "benevolence always remains a duty, even toward a misanthropist, whom one cannot love but to whom one can still do good" (DV:402). But here he is not claiming that it is our duty to wish others well whom we do not like; he is only claiming that it is our duty to do them good even when we cannot love them. So what Kant means by "benevolence" here is actually beneficence or active benevolence. He suggests that the latter is all that morality can require of us when he says that our duties of love involve an "active, practical benevolence (beneficence), making the well-being and happiness of others my end" (DV:452). Since ends are what we adopt as goals of action, it seems that acting benevolently, and not necessarily developing a particular attitude toward people, is all that morality requires of us.

But in his discussion of our other duties of love and of the vices directly opposed to the love of mankind, Kant does suggest that in addition to helping others, we are also required to adopt a benevolent attitude as well as loving feelings toward them. To wish others well, and if this should prove impossible (which, we shall see, would involve a moral failure), then at least to actively promote their



ends, is what morality asks of us from the outset; to use our inner sensible dispositions to cultivate an attitude of wishing them well is what morality asks of us in the long run. This will become clear in my discussion of some of the aforementioned duties and vices. But first let us consider what morality requires of us from the crude and possibly unfriendly outset: beneficent action.

## II. The Duty of Beneficence

This is the duty "to promote according to one's means the happiness of others in need, without hoping for something in return" (DV:453). Why do we have this duty and to whom, exactly, does it extend--to those whom we think of as "the needy" or to anyone who needs a favor or a friendly gesture?

In the Doctrine of Virtue as well as in the Groundwork, Kant suggests that we have a duty to help only those who are in relatively dire need--that we need only be prepared to satisfy people's ends of dignified survival but need not promote whatever morally permissible ends they might have. This interpretation is suggested by Kant's repeated emphasis on the needy (Menschen in Not) in his examples and derivations of the duty of beneficence (see DV:453, G:398, 423). This suggests that Kant is referring primarily to

people who are suffering, financially needy, or physically or mentally impaired. Such people are in need of fairly radical sorts of helping action. If this is the case, then the duty of beneficence could require me to be charitable--for instance, to take a financially strapped friend out for a meal once in a while--but not to support the same friend in whatever morally permissible projects he might have (I would not, for instance, be required to encourage or support him in his fledgling attempts at musical expression).

Onora O'Neill has interpreted the duty of beneficence more broadly, as asking us not only to promote people's basic ends of dignified survival but also to help them in whatever morally permissible projects they might need our help in completing. At least she suggests this much in her reconstruction of Kant's derivation of the duty, which I here paraphrase. As agents--that is, as setters and realizers of ends--we necessarily will the fulfillment of all our ends. But if we rationally intend an end, then we also intend to pursue the means by which we can realize it. As finite beings, however, we are not completely self-sufficient. Since, at some point in our lives, we will need the help of others to realize some of our ends (just as each of us has, in the past, already relied on the help and care of others), we cannot coherently will that others not help us. (Indeed, without such help from others we wouldn't even be here.) But the maxim of relying on the help of others is

not universalizable unless we are also prepared to help them. We must, in other words, be prepared not only to receive the help and support of others, but also to help and support them when needed. Thus we have a duty to help others.<sup>2</sup>

O'Neill's reading suggests that we have a duty to promote whatever permissible ends others need help in achieving. The actions required under the duty thus interpreted would clearly extend beyond helping the suffering; they would also include helping whomever might need our help in pursuing the projects which are important to them. At first sight, O'Neill seems to be stretching Kant's intended use of "needs." Recall that Kant's own discussion of the duty of beneficence suggests that he is referring primarily to the needs of the needy--the suffering, the financially strapped, or the physically or mentally impaired. If so, then O'Neill is overextending Kant's use of "needs" to include needs which are less basic than those which Kant himself intended. Kant seems to have intended only those needs which must be secured for dignified survival; O'Neill, by contrast, seems to include more "luxurious" needs such as emotional needs and the need for support in one's personal development.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>O'Neill, Constructions of Reason (hereafter referred to in the text as "O'Neill, CR"), pp.100-1, 114-15, 140-41.

<sup>3</sup>A least she suggests this much at CR, p.39, footnote 13.

A duty to enable the needy to survive in a dignified way can be seen as deriving from the requirement that we respect their status as ends in themselves--as rational beings possessing an inherent dignity. But a duty to promote people's ends as such, provided they are morally permissible, seems to require that we value their happiness and not just their rationality. What sort of reasoning lies behind the apparent logical leap from the duty to respect others as ends in themselves to the duty to promote their happiness? O'Neill offers the following passage from Kant:

Now humanity could no doubt subsist if everybody contributed nothing to the happiness of others but at the same time refrained from deliberately impairing their happiness. This is, however, merely to agree negatively and not positively with humanity as an end in itself unless everyone endeavors also, so far as in him lies, to further the ends of others (G:430; I use O'Neill's translation from CR, p.140).

Kant is here suggesting that we would fail to respect people's status as ends-in-themselves if we merely refrained from interfering with their ends; that in addition to tolerating their ends, we must also promote them by adopting them as our own. He offers nothing by way of argument to support this conclusion. Indeed, the conclusion seems entirely unwarranted given Kant's characterization of what it is to be an end-in-itself. An end-in-itself, he says, is

"an end which should never be acted against and therefore one which in all willing must never be regarded merely as a means but must always be esteemed at the same time as an end" (G:437).<sup>4</sup> The requirement that we always treat people as ends and never merely as means is here treated as equivalent to the requirement that we never act against people's status as ends in themselves. The obvious interpretation of this requirement as it bears on other people's ends is that we treat people as ends-in-themselves by esteeming or respecting their ends. It does not obviously follow, however, that respecting someone's ends involves adopting and promoting them.

O'Neill tries to use the notion of finite rational agency to connect the requirement of treating humanity as an end-in-itself with that of promoting other people's ends. Finite rational agency, she says, is vulnerable and must above all be preserved (that much is clearly required by the formula of the end-in-itself). She goes on to argue:

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<sup>4</sup>On Kant's view, people are ends in themselves because they are the potential vessels of a good will. The good or moral will is the only thing in the world which is unconditionally valuable or good (G:393-4). Since the good will is instantiated in all willing that is moral and not merely legal, the good will effectively wills itself and therefore also its own condition of possibility, rational nature (distinguished from the rest of nature by its capacity to set itself an end). Humanity is rational nature; therefore, humanity is an end in itself (G:437). Since moral willing is characterized by respect for the moral law and for our capacity to legislate it, the good will constitutes "the proper object of respect" and humanity, insofar as it embodies a will that is potentially good, possesses an inherent dignity (G:440).

Simple restraint from using other finite beings as mere means may not be enough to secure their agency. If vulnerable sorts of agency are to be developed and kept intact, the bearers of such fragile capacities for action may also need help in achieving certain subjective ends....Only by making the ends of others to some extent our own do we recognize others' agency fully, and acknowledge that they are initiators of their own projects as well as responders to our projects, and moreover vulnerable and non-self-sufficient initiators of projects. That (I think) is the point of the idea that we should agree "positively" with humanity as an end-in-itself. (O'Neill, CR, p.140)

The idea here is that we could effectively undermine people's agency by failing to support their projects. O'Neill's assumption is that people's very capacity for agency depends on things going well for them; that "when things go badly their very capacity for agency fails" (CR, p.139, footnote 13). If this is true, then respecting people's humanity does indeed entail promoting their ends.

But is it true? A person's ability to set ends is clearly not affected by how things are going for him--the most miserable pauper, despite his condition, is still able to set ends for himself. His ability to realize his ends, however, in so far as he does not possess the requisite financial or physical means to do so, is clearly affected by

his condition. Even a person who is psychologically in a bad way (say, in a period of self-doubt or mourning) might find his capacity to realize ends detrimentally affected by his psychological state--he might find that the projects which were once important to him now seem meaningless. Such persons are clearly in need of help in pursuing their projects. But those persons are physically or mentally needy. It is not immediately apparent that we could help undermine a healthy person's capacity for agency if we failed to support her in her various projects." There is nothing in O'Neill's argument, in other words, that implies that we have a duty to help those who are not in a bad way."

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"What about an individual who is extremely sensitive to the opinions which others hold of her projects? Would not such a person's capacity for agency be undermined if we failed to support her in her projects? It seems that this is the sort of "healthy" person O'Neill has in mind when she says that people's very capacity for agency depends on things going well for them; that "when things go badly their very capacity for agency fails" (CR, p.139, footnote 13). I am not sure, however, that Kant would hold that we have a duty to pamper sensitive souls. His ethics is, after all, a hardy ethics, a doctrine that characterizes the healthy individual as someone who is able "to put up with the misfortunes of life" (DV:484). Meeting with misunderstanding or disapproval of even our morally permissible projects is a common occurrence, a "misfortune" that each of us must get used to. All we have a right to demand from others is that they refrain from actively undermining our agency, that is, that they not interfere with our projects; we have no right to demand that they also approve of them and promote them. That is why we can refrain from helping others without accruing moral demerit (see DV:448, 450).

"In "Universal Law, Rational Being and the Kingdom of Ends: A Reading of Groundwork II" (unpublished), Paul Guyer interprets the Formula of the End-In-Itself as providing a positive requirement to promote rational nature in ourselves and in others. The arguments he offers in favor of his interpretation are suggestive but to my mind not quite convincing, since they are all based on Kant's discussion of duties toward ourselves and not toward others (see

Kant's own argument in the Doctrine of Virtue for promoting the happiness of others actually takes needs and not ends as placing a special moral claim on us. He says, "every man who finds himself in need wishes to be helped by others" (DV:453, my emphasis) and then goes on to use this supposedly universal wish to derive the general duty of beneficence, construed as a duty to help the needy: "But if he lets his maxim of being unwilling to assist others in turn when they are in need become public, that is, makes this a universal permissive law, then everyone would likewise deny him assistance when he himself is in need, or at least would be authorized to deny it. Hence the maxim of self-interest would conflict with itself if it were made a universal law" (DV:453). This argument makes no appeal to the dignity of rational nature, but rather to the assumption that everyone who is in need wishes to be helped by others. I take this assumption to be dubious; Kant is appealing to a wish that most of us may have but which can by no means be assumed to be universal (one can easily imagine a proud libertarian who would rather be self-sufficient than

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esp. pp.27-31). Kant argues that we are required to develop our own rational nature (our capacity for choosing and realizing ends) because, as rational beings, we necessarily will the realization of our present and future ends: "as a rational being, man necessarily wills that all capacities in him be developed, since they can be useful and are given to him for all sorts of possible ends" (G:423). Kant's arguments for promoting the happiness of others, however, make no appeal to the necessary features of rational nature but rather to the assumption that everyone who finds himself in need wishes to be helped by others--an assumption which I find unfounded.



humiliated by the help of others). If, however, the principle behind this argument is the dignity of rational nature and the need to preserve it, the argument gains more plausibility: we are required to help the needy because, like ourselves when we are needy, they are suffering the indignity of being stunted in the exercise of their rational capacities. Out of respect for these capacities, we are required to help them back to a healthy state.

Kant therefore has an argument for why we have a duty to help the needy survive in a dignified way: since their very capacity for agency is reduced by their condition, we need to help them back to a state in which they are able again to pursue their ends on their own (a state in which they most strongly feel their dignity). But to make "healthy" people's ends our own is something we cannot be held to by the moral law, since, as we have seen, it only requires that we respect people's ends and not, in addition, that we promote them. In the next section, I shall consider quite a different reason for why we have a duty to promote other people's happiness. But before I do so, I want to consider why Kant claims that beneficence produces love of man.

Kant claims that we have a duty to cultivate benevolence because it helps us combat the harmful disposition of hatred of man, a disposition which "is always hateful, even when it takes the form merely of completely

avoiding men" (DV:402).<sup>7</sup> One way to combat this disposition is to help people. For Kant thinks that even when we do not love a person from the outset, we can come to love him by helping him:

So the saying "you ought to love your neighbor as yourself" does not mean that you ought immediately (first) love him and (afterwards) by means of this love do good to him. It means, rather, do good to your fellow man, and your beneficence will produce love of man in you (as an aptitude of the inclination to beneficence in general) (DV:402).

Kant's assumption is that by doing good to others, we will come to love them. This is of course a tenuous assumption, given that we seem equally prone to develop feelings of disdain or even disgust toward the people we help. However, on Kant's theory of agency, we have the capacity to curb such negative feelings and to cultivate the loving feelings which can, on Kant's assumption, equally well be produced through beneficent action. Kant never explains how beneficence is supposed to produce love of man, but his idea

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<sup>7</sup>Kant's claim that hatred of man is wrong not because of its consequences but simply because it is "hateful" should alert us to how much of his discussion of our duties is driven by a certain vision of the good life, some elements of which follow from the categorical imperative, while other are present because of their intrinsic aesthetic appeal. Some of the duties which morality imposes on us can be fully justified only by appeal to these aesthetic elements. I shall show, in Section II, that for this reason we need to take these "ornamental" elements just as seriously as we take the categorical imperative itself.

seems to be that our interaction with the person we help will give us familiarity with her, will perhaps even provide an occasion for exchanging pleasantries, and that the patient's sense of decency (assuming she has any!) will prompt her to show gratitude toward us. On the whole, the experience is likely to be amiable, and so will produce in us some affection for the patient, will make us "love" her.

The pleasant social dimensions of the experience will make us more disposed toward beneficence in the future; but this natural feeling of love, even when broadened to encompass more individuals, is not what Kant means by the rationally based "love of man"; it is simply a pleasure in another person without a genuine concern for or willingness to take part in her ends, including a curiosity about them or interest in them. I think we all know the difference between casually uttering, "How are you doing?" (usually pronounced, "Howya doin'?") and sincerely being curious about the other person's condition (say, being genuinely interested in how a difficult exam went for her, etc.). The latter attitude the point at which natural love becomes tempered by a rationally based love of man ("practical love," humanitas practica), which involves a genuine well-wishing and sincere interest in her ends--and a willingness to promote them (DV:456).

We can also offer a more "technical" account of how beneficence produces benevolence, understood as both a

feeling and a disposition of wishing people well. In order to be beneficent, we need to make another person's ends our own (DV:450). In acting beneficently, therefore, we satisfy another persons's ends as well as our own. Since "the attainment of every aim [Absicht] is coupled with a feeling of pleasure" (CJ:187), beneficence will by its very nature be pleasant for us.\* But can this pleasurable result of beneficent action really be what Kant means by a benevolent attitude? It can, if Kant thinks the feeling of pleasure in question is coupled with an interest in the other person's well-being. We can offer the following Kantian reasons for concluding that the pleasure produced by beneficent action actually involves a benevolent attitude in the subject. Through beneficence, we contribute to another person's perfection--to her happiness, in so far as it is compatible with morality. Now, love of man, understood as a feeling, is simply pleasure in another person's perfection (DV:449). Beneficence thus produces love of man, or pleasure in another person's perfection. But it would seem that the pleasure produced by beneficence must also involve a benevolent attitude. For we cannot take pleasure in seeing somebody thrive whom we do not at the same time wish well; in order to feel love toward the patient, we must also wish

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\*The quote I offer from the Critique of Judgment has "Absicht" (purpose or intention) rather than "Zweck," which Kant normally uses in reference to ends of action. But the point should hold also in regard to ends of action.

her well. In this sense, beneficence produces benevolence. Whether or not this is what Kant actually had in mind for how beneficence produces a heartfelt interest in other people's well-being, it is at least a story which harmonizes with his own suggestions.

In the next two sections, I will consider why morality requires us to cultivate a loving disposition and how we can do it.

### III. Why Benevolence is Required of Us

If it is difficult to derive the duty of beneficence from the categorical imperative, we might expect it to be at least as difficult to derive a duty to cultivate benevolent feelings and attitudes, given that the latter seem valuable primarily as means to beneficent action. At least Kant says things which suggest that we are required to cultivate benevolence primarily for the purpose of using it to promote other people's happiness--either as a motive which cooperates with the duty-motive or as a feeling which alerts us to other people's need for help when thoughts of duty are not present in us.\* He says, for instance, that we should cultivate compassion because it is one of "the impulses that

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\*Barbara Herman suggests the former in "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," p.15; Paul Guyer suggests the latter in Kant and the Experience of Freedom, Ch.10, pp.389-90. I think Kant has both in mind, as well as a third alternative which I will suggest shortly.

nature has implanted in us to do what the representation of duty alone could not accomplish" (DV:457), which suggests that compassion is valuable as a motive for beneficent action in cases where the motive of duty somehow fails us. He also points out that if we ask not only what a person should do, but what he will do, love is an invaluable motive because "what a person does unwillingly he does so poorly, even resorting to sophistic subterfuges to evade the precept of duty, that this latter may not be relied on very much as a motive without the participation of love" (OH:338).<sup>10</sup> Again, Kant is stressing the power of love to move us to beneficence when the motive of duty should fail us.

However, as we saw in Part I--something which is also clear from Kant's example of the unsympathetic yet beneficent individual in Groundwork I--it is also possible to help people without loving them. Love is thus a sufficient but not a necessary motive for beneficent action. Since benevolent feelings are merely inessential means toward beneficent action, it would seem that a duty to cultivate such feelings is on even thinner justificatory ground than the duty of beneficence itself.

But Kant does not view benevolent dispositions as mere means toward beneficent action. He also sees benevolence as

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<sup>10</sup>Kant, "The End of All Things," from Kant on History, trans. L.W. Beck, p.82 (page reference in text is to Akademie edition).

something intrinsically valuable, something which has a justification independent of beneficent results. He says:

Would it not be better for the well-being of the world generally if human morality were limited to duties of Right, fulfilled with the utmost conscientiousness, and benevolence were considered morally indifferent? It is not so easy to see what effect this would have on man's happiness. But at least a great moral adornment, love of man, would then be missing from the world. Love of man is, accordingly, required by itself, in order to present the world as a beautiful moral whole in its full perfection, even if no account is taken of advantages (of happiness) (DV:458).

Love of man, or benevolence, is not required here as a means to promoting the happiness of others, but is required "by itself." Without love of man, the world would seem less perfect, would lack "a great moral adornment." The difference between an aesthetic and a moral adornment is unclear; Kant could equally well have said that the world would lack a great adornment if it lacked love of man. His point is simply that love of man has an intrinsic value which is most aptly characterized as aesthetic: it is needed to "present the world as a beautiful moral whole in its full perfection." Since this passage appears at the end of Kant's discussion of the three duties of love toward others, which are here being contrasted with juridical duties, we

can infer that it is also meant to apply to the duty of beneficence; and that promoting the happiness of others--including those who are not suffering or needy--is something which, like benevolence, is required for its intrinsic beauty and nobility.

What sorts of considerations might have led Kant to claim that love of man is required (presumably as a duty) even though it is only an aesthetic desideratum? I think we need here to curb our impulse to deduce everything from the categorical imperative and, for a moment, appreciate how much of Kant's discussion of our duties of love is driven by a certain vision of the good life, an integral part of which involves the desire to see people wishing each other well and cultivating appropriate feelings toward one another.<sup>11</sup> Although central elements of this vision follow from the categorical imperative, other elements are present because of their intrinsic aesthetic appeal--because of their capacity to beautify human nature.

In his discussions of why morality requires us to further the beauty of human nature, Kant's romantic impulse joins with his youthful British sentimentalist streak to produce some of the most aestheticized passages in his moral philosophy. He insists that a cultivated moral character must be beautiful as well as principled, and that although it is not our duty to possess feelings of benevolence from

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<sup>11</sup>I am grateful to Curtis Bowman for pointing this out to me.



the outset, we are required to cultivate them because they beautify human nature by beautifying the moral disposition itself. Since beauty, for Kant, inspires primarily with a feeling of love--beauty "prepares us to love something, even nature, apart from any interest" (CJ:267)--human nature at its most beautiful must, for Kant, be lovely. Benevolence beautifies a moral character by adding to the uprightness of a dutiful disposition a direct feeling for others which one naturally comes to express in one's demeanor. Through its outward effects and expressions, it gives a beautiful glow to virtuous action which inspires others to virtue itself.<sup>12</sup>

That Kant locates the value of kindly dispositions partly in their capacity to beautify a moral character will become clear in the next section, where I discuss the connection of benevolence to the social graces.

#### IV. Luxury, Social Grace and the Beautiful Character

The person who fails to recognize the importance of beauty as well as uprightness in a moral character might be compared to someone who fails to appreciate the capacity of her palate for tasting subtle flavors and, when served a meal, mixes up the meat, the vegetables and the sauce

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<sup>12</sup>The latter point, which is stressed in Kant's discussion of the social graces (which I turn to next) is strongly neo-Platonic, and Shaftesbury might have been an influence here.

"because it all ends up in the stomach anyway." Like the unrefined eater, the person who denies grace a role in morality expresses an attitude too base and pragmatic for man, given the capacity in human nature for refinement and beauty. Developing one's benevolence--the disposition of wishing people well as well as loving and respecting them--is the primary means for beautifying one's moral character.

The following passages on luxury are helpful in placing the value of benevolence as an inner disposition, for its beautifying power is much like that of luxury:

Riotous extravagance is active; [the] extravagance of self-indulgence is indolent. The former has its uses; it adds vitality and vigor to life; horse-riding, for instance, is a luxury. But all kinds of indolent effeminacy are very harmful; they sap the vital powers of man; tippling, wearing silk, driving in carriages are examples of this tendency. The man who is inclined to riotous extravagance preserves his own energy, as well as that of others, but he who indulges in the refinements of indolent comfort, though he maintains the energy of others, discourages his own. The former is, therefore, preferable to the latter (LE:173).

[Luxury] promotes the arts and sciences and develops man's talents; it thus seems to be the condition on which humanity is designed. It refines morality; for

in morality both uprightness and refinement are to be looked for; the one implies ungrudging observance, the other adds charm to this, as, for instance, in hospitality. Thus luxury tends to develop to the utmost the beauty of human nature. We must not confound it with self-indulgence. Luxury consists in variety; self-indulgence in quantity. Intemperance is a sign of lack of taste. A wealthy miser who entertains once in a while piles up the food on his guests' plate, but gives no thought to variety. But luxury requires good taste, and is found only with people who possess that quality; by its variety it clarifies man's judgment, gives occupation to many people and vitalizes the entire social structure. From this point of view, therefore, there can be no moral objection to luxury, provided it is managed so as to keep it within the bounds of what we can afford and continue to afford (LE:175-6).

Even though luxuries like horse-riding develop the beauty of human nature and vitalize society, Kant's last sentence makes it clear that there is no special duty to be luxurious or to cultivate the good taste required for it. Luxury is simply permissible. Nevertheless, since "in morality both uprightness and refinement are to be looked for," we do need to take steps to add charm to our moral demeanor; and being luxurious (when one can afford it) is one way of doing so.

It is clear from the first passage that the refinement which Kant is seeking is not a self-indulgent refinement, but rather one which has a vitalizing influence on the subject and on society as a whole. Just as luxury vitalizes subject and society, benevolence vitalizes a moral character by enabling her to use her feelings to heed the call of duty itself.

To be able to use one's feelings as guides to moral action, one has to cultivate them. Benevolence, respect, and love of man are the feelings we develop through the social graces. Through hospitality, courtesy, conversational ease, humor, and so forth, we naturally develop kindly dispositions toward others--feelings which enliven us to the world, alerting us to people's thoughts and needs. In other words, we cultivate our feelings in such a way that they align themselves with moral principles, making us more attuned to the call of duty itself.

Kant has the following to say about the power of the social graces to add charm to the uprightness of a moral cast of mind:

It is a duty to oneself as well as others not to isolate oneself...but to use one's moral perfections in social intercourse.... While making oneself a fixed center of one's principles, one ought to regard this circle drawn around one as also forming part of an all-inclusive circle of those who, in their disposition,

are citizens of the world--not exactly in order to promote as the end what is best for the world but only to cultivate what leads indirectly to this end: to cultivate a disposition of reciprocity--agreeableness, tolerance, mutual love and respect (affableness and propriety, humanitas aesthetica et decorum), and so to associate the graces with virtue. To bring this about is itself a duty of virtue (DV:473).

Although it is our duty to cultivate a graceful cast of mind, Kant is quick to point out that such charming qualities as affability, sociability, courtesy, hospitality and gentleness (in disagreeing without quarreling) are "only externals or by-products (parerqua) [of virtue]" in that they must never form the basis of virtue, which always consists in respect for the moral law. Nevertheless, socially graceful behavior resembles action from a moral disposition, beautifully carried out: the social graces "give a beautiful illusion resembling virtue that is also not deceptive since everyone knows how it must be taken" (DV:473, my emphasis). The social graces, in other words, give us a picture of how virtue can most beautifully be expressed. Indeed, they provide us with numerous occasions for cultivating and refining our emotional dispositions to a level at which they conform to and even become part of a moral cast of mind.

The normative rules governing hospitality, courtesy, and so on are of course not purely moral rules--indeed, many of them are not even a priori. They are rules of social intercourse, some of which are conditioned by the fashions of the times but some of which also have a priori grounding as rules of taste. By providing pleasing examples of principle-guided behavior, the social graces present a beautiful appearance of virtue which draws people in, giving them a "feeling" for virtue:

[The social graces] are, indeed, only tokens, yet they promote the feeling for virtue itself by a striving to bring this illusion as near as possible to the truth. By all of these, which are merely the manners one is obliged to show in social intercourse, one binds others too; and so they still promote a virtuous disposition by at least making virtue fashionable (DV:473-4).

Even though they exemplify merely legal action (action conforming to the moral law but not done from the motive of duty), the graces are supposed to make virtue "fashionable" by giving beautiful and pleasing instances of action which is in some sense obligatory. Kant seems to be suggesting that the mutual obligation involved in, say, hospitality (the obligation on the part of the host to serve his guests; on the part of the guests to express admiration or appreciativeness) gives us the dynamics of virtue in a pleasant packaging: the graces "sell" virtue, showing us

that it can be both beautiful to behold and pleasing to execute.

How can an illusion promote the real thing? Kant tells us that the social graces help us "cultivate a disposition of reciprocity--agreeableness, tolerance, mutual love and respect (affableness and propriety, humanitas aesthetica et decorum)" (DV:473). The question is whether such a disposition is compatible with the motive of duty and can join with it in a reasonably natural way. If Kant is able to provide a natural bridge from the disposition of reciprocity involved in socially graceful behavior to the virtuous disposition, he will have shown that the illusion can indeed promote the real thing--that the graces help us develop a virtuous disposition from which we carry out our duties toward others both from feelings of love and in a morally worthy way. If this is possible, then the social graces are indeed a training ground for virtue: they provide a context of mutual obligation which strengthens and develops our feelings of love and respect toward others, producing a disposition in which a sense of obligation combines with appropriate feelings towards others. In Part V, I shall show that it is indeed possible for the motive of duty to express itself as a genuine concern others (as love of man). First, however, let us consider how the social graces provide a "training ground" for virtue.

The dynamics of mutual obligation instantiated by the social graces correspond most clearly to those which accompany the carrying out of our duties of love toward others. We might expect, then, that the disposition of reciprocity cultivated by the social graces is relevant primarily to our duties of love toward others. For since respect is something we simply owe others, carrying out our duties of respect toward others imposes no obligation on them; and in this sense, there is no mutual obligation involved in our duties of respect. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the graces do provide instances of respectful behavior and are in this sense conducive also to carrying out our duties of respect towards others.

Kant stresses that in carrying out the duty of beneficence, we need to show respect as well as love toward the patient, for only this will truly promote her happiness. We need to show genuine good-will without appearing patronizing and without making the patient feel obligated toward us (even though technically speaking, she does incur a debt of gratitude toward us). We need, in other words, to give her the sweets of happiness without the bitters of indebtedness. We show respect for the patient's dignity by downplaying whatever sacrifices the act might involve for us (DV:453) and by making sure we help her according to her conception of happiness rather than our own (DV:454). Without feelings of love and respect toward others, we would



have to decide how to do this according to principles alone--not just the moral law but also a cumbersome array of empirical generalizations concerning human reactions and preferences. Although it is possible to decide how to act from principles alone, feelings tell us immediately, without extensive deliberation, how to act in a loving and respectful way: to do so, we simply express the love and respect we feel toward the person at the moment.<sup>13</sup>

Feelings of love and respect can help us decide not only when to act on moral requirements (as the case of compassion suggests) but also how to do it.

Through the social graces, we are trained to express our feelings of love and respect toward others in a graceful way. Take, for instance, the case of making a joke in order to ease the tension in a social gathering. Even though the

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<sup>13</sup>Analogously, Paul Guyer argues that according to Kant, feelings of closeness toward others "can be used to delimit the sphere of otherwise infinite, and therefore impractical, imperfect duties," i.e., to bring the total sum of occasions for beneficence to a humanly manageable quantity (Kant and the Experience of Freedom, Ch.10, p.390). Although I agree that feelings can be used to this end, I believe Guyer is stretching the evidence he cites from the Critique of Judgment in support of his claim. At CJ:169, Kant is attempting to characterize the principle which distinguishes the faculty of judgment from other faculties and makes it autonomous. He says this principle must be a rule of reflection and not a concept for determinant judgment because for the latter, "another faculty of judgment would again be required to enable us to decide whether the case was one for the application of the rule or not." Kant is here envisioning a regress of faculties of judgment which can be avoided only by assigning a principle of reflection to the faculty of judgment itself. It is thus a principle and not a feeling which is supposed to put and end to the regress. Although this passage might suggest something about the role of judgment in moral deliberation, I don't think it implies anything about the role of feeling in moral life.

art of making jokes has "no seriousness in its presentation" and thus belongs to agreeable rather than to fine art--and should be estimated accordingly, i.e., not according to rules of taste, which demand seriousness of presentation, but according to principles of gratification, which do not (CJ:336)--jokes still have the aim of pleasing others and do, in so far as pleasure is an end of others, promote the happiness of others. In making the joke, the agent might be moved by sympathy for the uncomfortable and tongue-tied condition of those who are present. But it would be insulting to express this sympathy as sympathy: it would underscore the embarrassing aspects of the situation and would thus constitute a violation of social etiquette. Through respect for the others present, the agent chooses to express her sympathy by means of a joke, relieving the tension in a way which appears effortless and hence imposes no sense of obligation on the others. Those who are present are relieved by the joke without at the same time feeling indebted toward the agent. The social occasion for making a joke thus illustrates the way in which feelings can show us how to be beneficent without appearing patronizing.

By providing a setting in which we express our feelings in response to a sense of obligation, the social graces train us to execute our moral requirements in a graceful and heartfelt way.

## V. Love of Man and the Good Will

But have we really done anything more than show that the social graces help us conform to moral requirements? We still need to show that the graceful and aesthetic aspects of social life are conducive to a virtuous disposition or a good will, and hence to action which not only conforms to moral requirements but which is also morally worthy. We need, in other words, to show that the disposition of reciprocity cultivated through the social graces can become part of the virtuous disposition itself. In order for this to be possible, kindly dispositions must be able to "merge" with the motive of duty (or reverence for the moral law), not simply be present along with it, and even become part of the motive of duty itself. This, I shall argue, is indeed possible, given a certain view of the motive of duty as it manifests itself in the morally mature individual.

As morally mature agents, we fulfill our duties towards ourselves in a morally worthy way (i.e., from the motive of duty) differs from the way in which we do so as moral novices--that is, as newly converted sinners or as morally inexperienced individuals (e.g., teenagers) who are just embarking on road to self-improvement. In order to fulfill our duties towards ourselves in a morally worthy way, the motive of duty must be effective in the sense that if cooperating natural motives were absent, we would still have

acted that way by the force of duty alone. The force of duty is certainly stern and uncompromising; but the motive of duty, I shall show, is not.

The motive of duty is captured at its most basic level (in moral novices) by reverence or respect for the moral law--a feeling of constraint in the face of moral obligations, accompanied by an awareness of the rightness and reasonability in fulfilling them as well as by a knowledge that we is not exempt from them because we are able to fulfill them (See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of respect for the moral law). As we strive to become better individuals, however, our moral perception improves in such a way that the motive of duty--a direct concern for the rightness of our actions--can directly manifest itself in terms of feelings other than respect for the moral law (though a basic regard for principle and use of it as a limiting condition is never abandoned). In the case of fulfilling our duties toward ourselves in a morally worthy way, the motive of duty manifests itself in reason-based feelings such as proper pride, self-respect and love of honor.

The morally mature agent is someone who has not only adopted the end of moral perfection but has also had the time to reflect on her moral requirements and the occasion to cultivate her feelings to conform to them. She is able to appreciate the structural analogies between natural

feelings which are morally beneficial and "moral" feelings which arise from her awareness of the moral law. Because she has strengthened her moral feelings by refining their natural counterparts and vice versa, she is able to express a direct concern for the morality of her actions in such a way that it manifests itself in different feelings in different situations (i.e., she fulfills her duties toward others from love of man--from a genuine interest in others and in their well-being--while she fulfills her duties toward herself from a sense of proper pride). In Chapter 3, I suggested that this "staggered" conception of the motive of duty (as enriching itself through a person's moral life) fits Kant's general model of moral improvement; here, I shall show that he must have had something like what I am suggesting in mind.

In the following passage from the Lectures on Ethics, Kant claims that all cultivation of feeling--he is discussing specifically its refinement through literature--helps us feel the "driving force of virtuous principles":

Even though [books] may overdo the charms and passions of which they treat, yet they refine our sentiments, by turning the object of animal inclination into an object of refined inclination. They awaken a capacity to be moved by kindly impulses, and render the indirect service of making us more civilized, through the training of inclination. The more we refine the crude

elements in our nature, the more we improve our humanity and the more capable it grows of feeling the driving force of virtuous principles (LE:237).

If cultivated feelings make us more capable of "feeling the driving force of virtuous principles," then they must be part and parcel of a responsiveness to principle itself--at least part and parcel of the sense of duty as it manifests itself in the morally mature agent, who has had the time and the occasion to cultivate her feelings in this way. On this view, which I accept and which I believe Kant also accepted throughout his ethical writings, feelings which help us carry out our duties can be cultivated in such a way that they become part of the motive of duty itself.<sup>14</sup>

The Kant of Groundwork I can of course be taken to have changed his mind about this. In his examples of morally worthy action, he sharply contrasts the motive of duty with other motives, including sympathy, which he himself later claimed to be conducive to the execution of our duties (DV:457). In particular, his sketches of the two beneficent characters--one who is naturally sympathetic but, when suddenly deadened emotionally by his own troubles, still helps others from a sense of duty; the other who is not naturally sympathetic but helps others because it is his duty to do so--seem to suggest that when our concern is

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<sup>14</sup>I am grateful to Cynthia Schossberger for helping me settle on this conception of the motive of duty in the mature moral agent.

moral worth, kindly feelings, however valuable, are irrelevant; and that even though such feelings may accompany the motive of duty in the performance of a morally worthy action, they are idle in determining the action's moral worth and the goodness of the agent's will. This certainly suggests that sympathetic feelings can never be part of the motive of duty itself, let alone be relevant to the goodness of an agent's will.

In the Groundwork and throughout his mature ethical theory, Kant clearly holds that actions have moral worth only when the motive of duty is effective. But the fact that helping actions can have moral worth even when kindly feelings are absent does not imply that such feelings cannot become part of the motive of duty itself.<sup>15</sup> In his discussion of gratitude in the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant says that benevolent dispositions are present "in one's thought of duty" (DV:456, my emphasis), thus clearly suggesting that kindly feelings can--and possibly even must--be present in the motive of duty itself. This passage appears in the context of a discussion of the obligation on the part of the recipient to repay beneficence with an equivalent favor to the benefactor or to someone else. Kant observes that even

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<sup>15</sup>Barbara Herman suggests that this is impossible when she says that in order for an action to have moral worth, the motive of duty must be the "primary" motive and kindly feelings, if present, must be present as "secondary motives" ("On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," The Practice of Moral Judgment, p.\*\*\*). Herman thus seems to believe that feelings can never become part of the motive of duty itself. As I will show, they can.

though a debt of gratitude can never be fully repaid, it must be accepted not as a burden but "as a moral kindness, that is, as an opportunity given one to unite the virtue of gratitude with love of man, to combine the cordiality of a benevolent disposition with sensitivity to benevolence (attentiveness to the smallest degree of this disposition in one's thought of duty), and so to cultivate one's love of man" (DV:456, last emphasis mine).

This is a dense and obscure passage, and I think it is best interpreted in light of what Kant says about love of man in his introduction to the Doctrine to Virtue. There, he classifies love of man among the "subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty," which he characterizes as follows:

All of them are natural predispositions of the mind (praedispositio) for being affected by concepts of duty, antecedent predispositions on the side of feeling [aestetisch]. To have these predispositions cannot be considered a duty; rather, every man has them, and it is by virtue of them that he can be put under obligation at all. Consciousness of them is not of empirical origin; it can, instead, only follow from consciousness of a moral law, as the effect this has on the mind (DV:399).

Love of man is an effect of our consciousness of the moral law only if it is part of our responsiveness to duty itself.



This clarifies our obscure passage to some degree: at least we know that a benevolent disposition is present "in one's thought of duty" as a natural predisposition enabling us to be affected by thoughts of duty. Since love and respect are the feelings that "accompany" (begleiten) the carrying out of our duties toward others (DV:448), love and respect are the ways in which reverence for the moral law manifests itself in the case of our duties toward others: they are the ways in which we feel the call of our duties toward others.<sup>16</sup> To cultivate benevolence, as love and respect for others, is in this sense to cultivate the motive of duty itself.

I have claimed that love of man is a predisposition "for being affected by concepts of duty" in the sense that it enables reverence for the moral law to express itself in a direct concern for the dignity and well-being of others. But didn't the examples from Groundwork I imply that the motive of duty is in principle independent of benevolent dispositions? If so, how can love of man be a condition of

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<sup>16</sup>Note Kant's distinction between respect for persons and reverence for the moral law at DV:467-8. There, he claims that although reverence for the moral law (Achtung vor dem Gesetz überhaupt) is our duty, it is not our duty to revere other men in general (andere Menschen überhaupt zu verehren), but only to respect them. However, he also says that "to revere the law...is man's universal and unconditional duty toward others, which each of them can require as the respect originally owed others" (DV:468), which clearly suggests that respect for the moral law, in our awareness of our duties of respect toward others, expresses itself as a feeling of respect for others. We can infer that the same holds for love in the case of our awareness of our duties of love toward others.

possibility of our very responsiveness to duty? For that is what Kant suggests it is when he says that it is in virtue of love of man (among other subjective preconditions on the part of feelings) that we "can be put under obligation at all" (DV:399).

Let us remind ourselves, first, that love of man as a precondition for acting on duty is "not of empirical origin" at all, but follows instead from our consciousness of the moral law. Love of man must therefore be distinguished from the natural endowment of a sympathetic character with which Kant contrasts the motive of duty in Groundwork I. What Kant argues in the Groundwork is that action from motives of natural origin--that is, from motives which are not part of a responsiveness to the moral law--has no moral worth. But if certain feelings are produced by our awareness of the moral law, then they are part of the motive of duty itself, and action from them has moral worth.

Love and respect for others are such feelings. Even though it is possible to love someone apart from any moral considerations, the structure of love as a natural feeling is such that it can combine with the love of man which, however weakly felt, is part of every person's moral consciousness. That is why Kant says that sexual love, even though it is sui generis, can still "enter into close union" with moral love once it is placed under the limiting conditions of practical reason (DV:426). Natural feelings

of love can, in other words, "combine" with the love of man which is of moral origin.

This "combination" can take place in two ways: natural feelings can be deepened through thoughts of duty, or the motive of duty can itself be deepened by comparing it to structurally analogous natural feelings. How are natural feelings deepened by thoughts of duty? A love which we initially enter into from desire matures, with time and through reflection and self-criticism, into a rational love--a love involving a genuine interest in the ends of the other person as well as a sense of responsibility toward the beloved. This mature love is characterized by a sense of humility (tempering one's pride), patience (not being so quick to react defensively) and an acceptance of the other person even on his less glorious days. These qualities--which are all aspects of the motive of duty itself, as it manifests itself in that particular relationship--deepen the love itself. Principles are thus not only factors which condition our emotions--they also change and deepen them.

This claim, that acting from duty towards a loved one deepens our love, can be considered a corollary to Kant's claim that practicing beneficence towards someone we do not necessarily love produces love in us toward the recipient (DV:402). Acting on principle not only brings to life certain latent emotions, but also deepens and stabilizes existing ones. It is because of the fact that they are

judgment-infused that cultivated emotions are morally worthy motives. Acting from a mature love--a love cultivated through judgment and reflection--involves an awareness of the rightness in so acting--a matter moral conviction as well as of emotion. A sense of duty is thus intrinsic to acting from reflectively cultivated emotions. Since cultivated emotions themselves involve a sense of duty, acting from such emotions has moral worth.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>My account of how moral worth can attach to certain emotionally motivated actions differs from Paul Guyer's account in Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality, Chapter 10, pp.380-1. Guyer uses the idea of different levels of motivation to explain how an agent can act from emotion while still being morally worthy in his intentions. Since the motive of duty, according to Guyer, is a "second-order intention governing one's conduct rather than...a specific or first-order intention in every action" (p.380), an agent can be considered morally worthy for intending to do what duty requires even when acting from feeling on specific occasions. If the motive of sympathy should be more effective on a given occasion, the agent can allow himself to be motivated by it and still be considered morally worthy because he has the general (second-order) intention to do what duty requires of him. Although I find Guyer's idea of levels of motivation attractive, I do not take it to be a plausible explanation of how moral worth attaches to emotionally motivated actions. If the motive of duty is not even strong enough to move the agent to action on a given occasion, how can the agent be considered to be sincere in his dutiful intention? A closer connection between duty and feeling is required. I have tried to supply that connection through my claim that cultivated feelings themselves involve a sense of duty, and that the duty-feelings can be strengthened through reflection on and refinement of their natural counterparts. On my account, cultivated feelings are themselves morally worthy motives because a sense of duty is, as it were, built into them. Guyer, by contrast, sees feeling as "a fallback for those situations in which one knows that as a human rather than holy will one might not be able to act out of the thought of duty alone" (p.381). This claim not only rests on a misinterpretation of Kant's idea of a holy will, which, because it always acts on the moral law, does not experience the law as constraining and so has no sense of duty (DV:396-7, 405, CPrR:32, 83-4), but also leaves us wondering how an agent can be said to be sincere in his dutiful intention when he needs an emotional

Secondly, the motive of duty can itself be deepened by aligning it with natural feelings. But why, first of all, do we need to deepen our sense of duty if the motive of duty is ubiquitous? The motive of duty is ubiquitous in the sense that it is always available as a motive for us to act on, regardless of our emotional state. Insofar as love of man is a subjective precondition for being responsive to moral requirements, it too is ubiquitous in this sense. As I showed in Chapter 1, however, Kant knows that even though we may have adopted the basic intention to be moral, we are often tempted to neglect and even violate our moral requirements and are, moreover prone to deceive ourselves about our real motives. In order to counteract these tendencies, we must take steps to make our awareness of duty as compelling and heartfelt as possible so that, when

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"fallback" to carry out his duty. Only if the emotions themselves admit of a sense of duty, and so, can be elevated to play a nobler and purer role than being mere "fallbacks," can we explain how moral worth can attach to emotionally motivated actions. I also wish to supplement Guyer's account of why moral perfection (purity of motive) is a wide or imperfect duty. Guyer attributes it to our moral frailty, claiming that "complete moral purity is unobtainable for us" because we do not have holy wills (p.381), and so, that moral perfection can only remain an unattainable ideal for us. But Kant does not deny us the possibility becoming morally pure. He only denies that we could know that we are morally pure (see DV:447 for his claim that we could be "complete" in our virtues though we could ever know that we were). Since we cannot be under duty to do something of which we are incapable, we cannot have a duty to know ourselves completely, but only to submit ourselves to relentless scrutiny and to strive for purity in our motives (DV:392-3). Kant's classification of the duty to moral perfection (self-knowledge and self-perfection) among imperfect duties thus rests on the thesis of the inscrutability of our motives at least as much as it rests on the idea of human frailty.

presented with a temptation to stray, we will see our sense of duty as so intimately bound up with our cultivated sensuous character that acting immorally would be contrary to our very identity.

It is here that natural feelings enter the picture. Under the guidance of practical reason, we align our natural dispositions with feelings which have their basis in the moral law (e.g., love of man). Given their a priori origin, these "moral" feelings are likely to be less vibrant or heartfelt than feelings which have a natural origin (e.g., sexual love). But because of their analogous structure to that of certain kinds of natural feelings, moral feelings can be strengthened by means of refining their natural counterparts. Since moral feelings are part of our very responsiveness to moral requirements, strengthening them amounts to strengthening the motive of duty itself. We strengthen the motive of duty by cultivating moral feelings, and we do so by refining their natural counterparts under the guidance of practical reason. In the final section, I will consider the choleric temperament to show how this might take place [TO BE FILLED OUT IN FINAL VERSION].

## VI. Cultivating Moral Feelings

I begin with Kant's sketch of the choleric person.

### The Choleric Temperament of the Hot-Blooded Man

We say of the choleric man: he is fiery burns up quickly like straw-fire, and can be readily appeased if others give in to him; there is no hatred in his anger, and in fact he loves someone all the more for promptly giving in to him. --His activity is swift, but not persistent. --He is active, but reluctant to undertake business just because he is not persistent in it; so he likes to be the chief who merely presides over it, but does not want to carry it out himself. So his ruling passion is ambition: he likes to take part in public affairs and wants to be loudly praised. Accordingly he loves the show and pomp of ceremony; he gladly takes others under his wing and seems to be generous--not from love, however, but from pride, since he loves himself most of all. --He lays stress upon good order and so seems to be more clever than he really is. He is acquisitive so that he need not be stingy; he is courteous but ceremonious, stiff and stilted in social relationships; he likes to have some flatterer at hand to be the butt of his wit. When someone stands up to his proud pretensions he suffers even more than a miser who meets with opposition to his avaricious claims; for

a little caustic wit quite blows away the nimbus of his importance, whereas the miser is compensated for his by what he gains. --In short, the choleric is the least fortunate of all the temperaments, since it is the one that arouses most opposition to itself (A:154-5).

The moral strength of this character is his pride. Since it does not amount to "proper" pride (love of honor) but rather to arrogance or lust for honor--manifest in his need to have people praise and flatter him--it is clearly a strength that has been turned into a vice. Nevertheless, given a morsel of humility, he would have little difficulty converting his arrogance into an attitude of "proper" pride or self-respect, since pride is already a highly developed disposition in him. He might do so by reflecting on the moral law and realizing that it, not his wealth or social standing, is what gives him his unconditional worth. The respect he will feel for the moral law will humble him, and that will help tone down his arrogance into a proper pride.

The main moral weaknesses in this character, however, is his inability to balance his love of others with respect for them. He certainly loves people, even though he does so for the wrong reasons--for loving him--but he can hardly be said to respect them at all, since he sees himself as being more important than they. How can he change this? He is not even fully aware of the viciousness of his disrespect



for others unless he has already adopted the basic intention to be moral, which alerts him to the vice and makes him strive to avoid it in the future. He therefore begins by adopting a negative attitude toward his disrespect--knowing it is a vicious tendency--and must continue by attending to the ways in which his disrespect crops up in his treatment of other people.

Given his flair for pomp and celebration, he is likely to be active in society; however, his disrespect for others makes him fail in the social graces. He hosts dinners not in order to entertain but to glorify himself, and he is likely to dominate the discussion and ridicule other people's views. Simply engaging in society will therefore not change him unless he attends to the ways in which the rules of social etiquette require respectful behavior--e.g., disagreeing without quarreling and being grateful toward one's hosts (for gratitude, as Kant sees it, is primarily a stance of respect rather than love toward the benefactor; DV:454).<sup>16</sup> Attending to and improving his manners is one way of cultivating his respect toward others.

He can also use his choleric temperament in favor of morality. Because his activity is swift (though not persistent), he is more likely than, say, the melancholy man to have the power to act on his moral resolutions. He can

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<sup>16</sup>I thus disagree with Paul Guyer's claim that gratitude is a stance of love toward the benefactor; see Guyer's discussion of gratitude in Ch.10, Kant and the Experience of Freedom.

use his swiftness to help others when he feels the call of duty. But given his lack of respect for others, he is likely to be patronizing in carrying out his duty of beneficence, and he is likely to fail to fulfill his duties of respect toward others altogether. To combat these tendencies, he might develop feelings of respect for others by using his active powers elsewhere (in situations in which moral concerns are the not primary concern). He might, for example, engage in martial arts--which require both swiftness and respect for one's opponent--to align his undeveloped moral predisposition to respect others (a disposition which exists in him through his awareness of humanity as an end in itself) with natural feelings of respect for his instructors and opponents. With time, these natural feelings will strengthen his moral feeling of respect for others to extend to humanity in general.

Moral progress, for this person, will be difficult in the beginning. Because he is a moral novice, the moral law will from the outset strike him as a stern requirement; and the motive of duty, since it is undeveloped in him, will from the outset be felt as purely constraining. However, as he begins to change his ways--to be sure a difficult process--his feelings will begin to fall in line with the motive of duty in the ways I have described above, and he will begin to enjoy doing his duty. The sensible aspects of the motive of duty itself--its "subjective preconditions"

such as love of man--will become more developed and will eventually allow the duty-motive to express itself in a heartfelt disposition: a genuine love and respect for mankind.

### Conclusion

I have attempted to show that in the morally mature agent who has had time and occasion to cultivate her emotions for moral ends, the motive of duty in regard to other people expresses itself in a direct and heartfelt concern for the dignity and well-being of others, i.e., in love and respect for mankind. The motive of duty can express itself in this way because it incorporates the moral feelings which in turn can be strengthened by cultivating their natural analogues. Actions which are undertaken from cultivated feelings thus have moral worth not because of the overarching intention to be moral--for intention does not amount to action; and even if the act of cultivating the emotions for moral ends has moral worth, acting from such emotions can have no moral worth unless those emotions are themselves part of the motive of duty--but rather because the cultivated feelings have been incorporated into the motive of duty itself, enabling it to express itself in a

direct and heartfelt concern for the morality of our actions."<sup>9</sup>

We are finally in a position to understand Kant's claim in the Religion that the temperament or "aesthetic character" of virtue is not "fear-ridden and dejected" but rather "courageous and hence joyous" (R:19n)--a claim that at first glance strikes the reader as overly optimistic, given the feeling of constraint involved in the thought of duty. A person with a developed virtuous disposition will not experience the constraint involved in the thought of duty as oppressive, but will have cultivated the feelings which attend it and will therefore take pleasure not only in fulfilling her duties but also in acting from the motive of duty itself.

Kant therefore sells himself short when he says, earlier in the same passage, that "by the very reason of the dignity of the idea of duty I am unable to associate grace

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<sup>9</sup>While I am basically sympathetic with Paul Guyer's attempt to show that acting from cultivated feelings has moral worth, I differ from him when I claim that the motive of duty incorporates cultivated feelings. Guyer's account of duty as a second-order intention directing us to cultivate feelings and to use them in particular situations "when the motive of duty fails us" (Guyer, Ch.10, my emphasis) can only explain how the cultivation of feeling takes on moral worth. It obviously does not explain how acting from cultivated feelings on particular occasions can have moral worth, since Guyer himself describes those situations as cases in which the motive of duty "fails us." Since I believe that Kant's account of good willing in the Groundwork commits him to a case-by-case conception of good willing--a conception of moral worth as something which is instantiated in particular actions--it is not enough to derive moral worth from a basic intention to act morally. (I here differ from Barbara Herman in "Integrity and Impartiality," footnote??, The Practice of Moral Judgment).

with it. For the idea of duty involves absolute necessity, to which grace stands in direct contradiction" (R:19n). He goes on to say that the graces do indeed have a place in the moral life--beneficence, for instance, has beautiful results and can thus accompany the thought of duty in the developed virtuous disposition, but only as attendants and not as part of the thought of duty itself:

Virtue, also, i.e., the firmly grounded disposition to fulfil our duty, is also beneficent in its results, beyond all that nature and art can accomplish in the world; and the august picture of humanity, as portrayed in this character, does indeed allow the attendance of the graces. But when duty alone is the theme, they keep a respectful distance.

Kant seems here to forget about the moral feelings of his Introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue. These feelings, we have seen, provide the bridge between dignity and grace: cultivating them enables the motive of duty to express itself in a heartfelt concern for both the morality of our actions and for the dignity and well-being of other people--a stance which is possible only if the motive of duty admits of the graces themselves.

## Chapter 5:

### Kant on Personal Attachments

Kant has often been criticized for failing to appreciate the importance of personal commitments in moral decision-making. The criticism is aimed primarily at Kant's conception of moral judgments and actions as impartial, as reflecting maxims or principles to which any other rational agent could assent. When I make a moral judgment, on Kant's view, I am supposed to abstract from my personal biases and attachments, since these factors might otherwise color my judgment, making it reflect my own idiosyncratic conception of the good rather than a principle to which any rational agent could assent. This requirement of impartiality, the criticism goes, disregards the fact that in order to the right thing, we often need to be sensitive to the special demands of the relationships in which we find ourselves. Kant seems to be asking us to disregard personal ties in our moral decisions; but since morality often demands responses tailored to just those types of relations, Kantian ethics blinds us to a--perhaps even the--key aspect of moral life.<sup>1</sup> I want to

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<sup>1</sup>See, for instance, Stuart Hampshire, "Public and Private Morality," in Public and Private Morality, ed. Stuart Hampshire (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), p.40; and Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," Moral Luck (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), pp.18-19. See Williams, "Morality and the Emotions," Problems of The Self (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.209-29 for criticisms aimed at Kant's purported neglect of the emotions and for a sanguine presentation of the claim that sensitivity to the emotions is in fact the key to moral perception and judgment.

show that Kantian morality is not in fact blind to the requirements of the personal. The moral law is, to be sure, impartially conceived, but personal attachments give rise to special claims and duties even within that impartial frame.

Moral concerns manifest themselves in a specific way within our personal relations: we are either aware of or concerned about the rightness of our actions and the appropriateness of our feelings to that particular relationship. Interpersonal relations such as love and friendship thus have moral dimensions--specific duties and attitudes appropriate to hold toward the loved one--which define what it is to be a good friend, girlfriend, wife, etc. in the first place. To disregard these moral dimensions is to fail to appreciate what true love and friendship are. Good performance within the personal realm, I want to show, is defined by essentially moral considerations.

Those who associate the Kantian concept of duty with basically impersonal considerations will be skeptical about my claim that there are special duties toward special persons. For if acting from duty involves taking up a standpoint which any rational agent could in principle adopt, how can duty penetrate into the subtleties of personal relations?

To answer this question, I will first show that moral decision-making, as Kant conceives of it, can at least accommodate personal considerations. I then move on to the question of the types of personal considerations duty can accommodate in order to determine whether they are subtle enough

to satisfy Kant's critics. In particular, I consider the extent to which duty is a desirable motive for the actions we undertake in our personal relationships, and ask how it relates to other motives (e.g., love) which are also desirable within those relations. I then consider three criticisms which Williams levels against various claims that Kant makes about the emotions. I show that these claims do not in fact have the consequences for Kantian morality that Williams takes them to have. I conclude with a discussion of friendship, which for Kant sets an emotional paradigm toward which we should strive in all moral relations. This explains why we have a duty to form and to cultivate friendships.

#### I. Why it is permissible to favor friends

I begin by showing that moral decision-making, as Kant thinks of it, can at least accommodate personal considerations. Before we make any moral decision, on Kant's view, we need to identify the maxim which our proposed course of action will reflect (G:399-400). Even though the maxim is formed in response to the situation at hand, it also embodies a personal policy which describes more generally how we are prepared to act in situations of that sort. In order to be morally permissible, our maxim or "subjective principle of action" (G:422n) must conform to an objective (universally valid) principle of action--the categorical imperative: "So act that the maxim of your action



could become a universal law" (DV:389, G:421).<sup>2</sup> In testing our maxim against the requirements of the categorical imperative, we impose a formal condition on our maxim, namely, that it be a policy to which every other rational agent could in principle consent. To determine whether our maxim meets this condition, we ask ourselves what the world would be like if everybody acted on the maxim, taking into account the empirical conditions which would have to obtain in this world for everybody to realize the maxim.<sup>3</sup> If I could act on my maxim in such a world, the maxim is morally permissible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The categorical imperative is distinguished from the moral law by its form. The moral law is a description of all rational willing; the categorical imperative is a command. Because human beings do not by nature conform to the moral law (G:413), reason presents it to us not as a description of the way we do act (as it does to God), but rather as a command for how we should act.

<sup>3</sup>The clause, "in this world" is important. Only with a background of empirical facts are our intentions determinate enough for us to work out whether there exist feasible means for executing our intentions and what the predictable results of this would be. See Onora O'Neill, (then Onora Nell), Acting on Principle, pp.62-77. Her account of what it is to rationally intend an end also shows how the categorical imperative test can require an explication of the empirical means necessary for realizing and end as well as a consideration of the results of doing so while entailing neither empiricism nor consequentialism.

<sup>4</sup>There are actually two types of maxims--permissible and obligatory--which satisfy the condition that we be able to act on the maxim in a world in which everybody acted on it. The difference between permissible maxims (e.g., "I will always eat white rather than red meat") and obligatory ones (e.g., "I will strive to cultivate my talents") lies in the formal implications of their negations. The negations of obligatory maxims yield contradictions when universalized; those of permissible maxims do not. There are two types of obligatory maxims: maxims instantiating perfect duties (duties which one must under no circumstances refrain from adhering to) and maxims instantiating imperfect duties (duties which require the basic intention to fulfill them but which leave us some latitude in deciding when to

This universality test is eminently impartial in that it requires us to test our maxims against common human reason. But this does not prevent personal considerations from figuring in our maxims. Since we form them in response to the particulars of a situation, our maxims can accommodate whatever considerations we take to be morally relevant in that situation, including ties of loyalty to particular persons. The fact that our maxims must then pass the universalizability test does not entail that morality leaves no room for personal considerations, as long as those considerations are morally permissible.<sup>3</sup>

Does this mean that it is permissible to choose to help a friend rather than a stranger? Let us first consider why we have a duty to help others at all. As agents--that is, as setters and

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do so). The negation of a maxim instantiating a perfect duty contradicts its universalized counterpart in the sense that it would be impossible to carry out the maxim in a world reflecting the latter. For instance, I could not make a false promise in a world in which everyone knows promises to be false, since no one would believe me (G:422). The negation of a maxim instantiating an imperfect duty contradicts not its universalized counterpart as such, but the means necessary for carrying out the maxim. For instance, I cannot will a maxim of non-beneficence because I am not self-sufficient, and will therefore need the help of others to carry out some of my ends. In a world in which everyone acted on a maxim of non-beneficence, the means toward the fulfillment of some of my ends would be unavailable; but as an agent, I necessarily will the fulfillment of all my ends. Since I will sometimes depend on others to help me realize my ends, I cannot coherently will that I not help others and that others not help me. For a helpful discussion of these examples and, in general, of the nature of universalizability in Kant, see Onora O'Neill (then Onora Nell), Acting on Principle, Chapter 5. For Kant's own characterization of the difference between permissible, obligatory and forbidden maxims, see MM:221-8.

<sup>3</sup>See Barbara Herman, "Integrity and Impartiality," Monist (2), 1983, pp.247-8 for a clear statement of this point.

realizers of ends--we necessarily will the fulfillment of all our ends. But if we rationally intend an end, then we also intend to pursue the means by which we can realize it.<sup>6</sup> As finite beings, however, we are not completely self-sufficient. Since, at some point in our lives, we will need the help of others to realize some of our ends, we cannot coherently will that others not help us. But the maxim of relying on the help of others is not universalizable unless we are also prepared to let others rely on our help. We must, in other words, be prepared not only to receive the help of others, but also to help them when needed. Thus we have a duty to help others.<sup>7</sup>

Now Kant makes it clear that we have a considerable latitude in deciding whom to help and when. This latitude is the mark of all imperfect duties, including our duties of love toward others (DV:390). Kant stresses that even though our duties of love extend to the ends of others in general, we are most likely to carry them out with regard to our loved ones: "in wishing I can be equally benevolent to everyone, whereas in acting I can, without violating the universality of the maxim, vary the degree greatly in accordance with the different objects of my love (one

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<sup>6</sup>In this paragraph, I am following Onora O'Neill's interpretation of Kant's reasoning behind our duty to help others. See Onora O'Neill, Constructions of Reason, pp.114-15, 140-1.

<sup>7</sup>I am here disregarding the problems I raised with this argument in Part II, Chapter 4. Since I am, at this point, undecided about whether humanity as an end in itself imposes on us a positive requirement to promote the ends of others, I am here assuming that it does and that Kant's argument for the duty to promote other people's happiness is sound.

of whom concerns me more closely than another)" (DV:452). As long as we have the basic intention to help other people sometimes, we are permitted to favor friends over strangers in realizing this intention. The maxim of favoring friends, in other words, is itself fully universalizable. If we were faced with the choice of helping a friend or helping a stranger, the stranger could consent to our maxim of favoring our friends because the stranger realizes not only that it is humanly impossible to help everyone, but also that, as finite beings, we are not self-sufficient and will therefore need the help of our nearest and dearest in carrying out some of our projects. There is nothing morally wrong, then, in giving primacy to our friends in carrying out our duties of love. As imperfect duties, they give us just the degree of flexibility we need in order effectively to promote other people's happiness.

Moral decision-making, as Kant conceives of it, can thus at least accommodate personal considerations. I now move on to the question of the types of personal considerations duty can accommodate in order to determine whether these considerations are subtle enough to satisfy Kant's critics.

## II. Williams' first objection

There is at least one critic who would not be satisfied with the response we have given so far, and that is Bernard Williams. We have shown that according to the categorical imperative test, maxims paying special heed to the needs of our loved ones are

permissible. But Williams complains that the very requirement that we test our maxims against the categorical imperative compromises our personal integrity and our commitment to the relationships in which we are involved. In his adaptation of Charles Fried's example of the shipwrecked couple, he identifies a case of right action which he believes can neither be justified nor properly motivated by the considerations inherent in the categorical imperative test.

In the example, a man is facing a shipwreck in which several people are drowning, including his wife. Williams objects to the idea that morality should not allow the agent to act directly out of love for his wife and save her without second thought; that it should require him first to determine whether it is permissible to save her rather than someone else. Says Williams,

...this construction provides the agent with one thought too many: it might have been hoped (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife.\*

If the agent sets aside his feelings for his wife and decides to save her according to the impartial procedure prescribed by the moral law, he acts not from affection for her but from the thought that it is permissible to save someone he is attached to. For Williams, this motive involves "one thought too many," since

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\*Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," p.18.

it "signals a willingness not to save her if that were morally necessary." In asking the agent to disregard his immediate inclination to save his wife, Kantian morality denies the agent any direct expression of his deepest emotional attachments. This alienates the agent from those attachments and thereby compromises his personal integrity.

It is important to appreciate the force of this objection. Williams is claiming that if morality is to make any legitimate claims on us at all, then those claims must be compatible from the outset with the requirements of the personal. Kantian morality fails in this regard because it misconstrues the personal commitments on which we must be prepared to act. To be committed to a relationship is to be prepared to treat the other person in special ways; but Kant, apparently overlooking the emotional basis of such commitments, gets their structure wrong. For Kant, the ultimate sanction for acting on personal commitments must come from the categorical imperative. But since our personal commitments have grown out of feelings for the other person and not from universalistic concerns, the categorical imperative test distorts our motives for acting on those commitments. For Kant, the shipwrecked husband's motivating thought, in order to be morally acceptable, has to be "She is my wife, and in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife." But according to Williams, the only truly proper

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'Barbara Herman, paraphrasing Williams in "Integrity and Impartiality," p.245 (emphasis mine).

motive in the scenario in question is "She is my wife, and therefore I will save her." Whether or not it is accompanied by actual feelings of love, this thought signifies a commitment which gives the agent a direct reason to act without introducing any need for impartial considerations. To allow the thought of duty to intrude on our personal lives alienates us from our commitments by forcing us to disregard the natural motives to which those commitments give rise.

Now there is certainly something deep and important in the idea that preserving our personal integrity involves letting ourselves be "swept up" by the feelings our relationships engender, and that an acceptable morality must allow us to act on those feelings. However, our moral convictions sometimes run against the tide of our feelings. Imagine the shipwrecked husband tempted to throw an infant overboard in order to reach his drowning wife,<sup>10</sup> or a situation in which the other person's end is morally unacceptable--say, the case of deciding whether to help a friend who is planning to rob a bank. In cases like this, it would be wrong to neglect to ask whether the proposed action is permissible before undertaking it. A moral agent knows this, and will therefore see her personal commitments as constrained by the requirements of the moral law. As we saw in Part I, this does not mean that she must disregard her personal commitments in deciding what to do. It only means that she must see them as

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<sup>10</sup>Herman, "Integrity and Impartiality," p.246. See pp.247-8 for her version of the response I give in this paragraph.

conditioned by a respect for humanity. Since it is the mark of a morally responsible person to know whether it is right or wrong, in a given situation, to act on her immediate inclinations, it is only reasonable that morality should require us to check our maxims for their permissibility.

Is the Kantian agent alienated from her attachments? Does her regard for the moral law distort her immediate inclination to help her loved ones? Williams thinks so because he believes that the only motive which is morally acceptable to the Kantian agent is the thought that it is morally permissible to help one's loved ones. In what follows, I hope to show that Kantian morality in fact gives her other motives to act on. This will also involve distancing myself from the conventional Kantian line of response to Williams which I have been pursuing so far. The conventional line, perhaps most famously made by Barbara Herman, is to stress that it is not unreasonable--not one thought too many--to have morality place limiting conditions on our immediate inclinations. That's fine as far as it goes, but I want to develop the stronger position that morality actually generates specific duties toward our loved ones. These duties require us to cultivate feelings which can help preserve the relationship and which yield motives more desirable within the relationship than sheer respect for the moral law. In Section IV, I will ask whether Kant's conception of special commitments allows for the specific motivational structure sought by Williams. But first I want to show that



according to Kant it is not only permissible but also obligatory to treat special persons in special ways.

### III. Why personal ties give rise to special duties

It is somewhat ironic that Williams should illustrate his criticism of Kant with a case in which an agent faces a conflict between the demands of marriage and the claims which other human beings have on him. Marriage is one of Kant's favorite examples of how entering into close relationships imposes special duties on us. I will use the case of marriage to illustrate how special claims can grow out of emotional bonds, but my illustration holds for any type of committed relationship.

As early as 1764, in the Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, Kant notes that the virtuous husband does not merely say, "I love and treasure my wife, for she is beautiful, affectionate, and clever," since old age and familiarity will surely alter that image of her; he says, instead, "I will treat this person lovingly and with respect, for she is my wife." In the latter attitude, Kant says, "the noble ground remains and is not so much subject to the inconstancy of external things" (OBS:65).<sup>11</sup> When the initial passion fades, only the latter attitude can preserve the relationship. Kant expresses the same view in the Lectures on Ethics, where he says that "a man may act kindly towards his wife from love, but if his

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<sup>11</sup>Nothing in Kant's discussion precludes the virtuous husband from holding both attitudes towards his wife, as long as the former is subordinated to the latter.

inclination has evaporated he ought to do so from obligation" (LE:193). Love must be tempered by principles lest it turn fickle and insubstantial.<sup>12</sup> Kant thus seems to hold that personal relations--at least those which are characterized by some sort of commitment--have a special value which imposes duties on us to keep them going even in the face of hardships.

Before I explain why Kant takes personal relations to have a special value, I want to turn to the question of how natural emotional ties can give rise to a set of special duties which is most aptly characterized as moral.

We usually seek to enter into a relationship because we like or desire the other person. When these feelings are mutual, natural ties develop and the relationship is underway. It is important to note, however, that even in this early stage, the relationship is characterized not only by natural feelings but also by mutual consent: we do not form emotional bonds with people for whom we have no affection. If we decide, again by mutual consent, to continue the relationship to the point where we become dependent on each other--sometimes even indispensable to each other--and therefore vulnerable to the actions of the other, we have effectively entered into a mutual commitment to preserve the relationship. Because this commitment is implicitly

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Guyer makes essentially this point with regard to Williams' drowning scenario, and concludes: "Not only in friendship but in marriage and every other personal relation our feelings are fragile and liable to interruption, and must always be governed as well as cultivated in accordance with principle" See Guyer, Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality, Chapter 10, p.393.

moral in nature, it gives rise to special duties toward the other person. These duties include not committing breaches of trust, actively promoting the ends of the other, and cultivating the emotions needed to preserve the relationship (see DV:452, 470-2). The increased mutual dependence of persons involved in a relationship thus gives rise to certain expectations regarding how they should act toward one another, and these expectations form the basis for special claims which are moral in nature.

The special claims which relationships impose on us are of course defeasible in nature. Relationships impose on us neither unconditional nor permanent obligations: their requirements can be waived if the friend or lover turns out to place unreasonable or even immoral demands on us, or if, by mutual agreement, the relationship is broken off. Nevertheless, when the relationship is something that both parties want to preserve, it creates a unique set of ends, ends which can only be promoted by the friend or lover and not by anyone else. This unique set of ends makes it easier to violate the demands of the relationship than it is to violate the claims which a stranger may have on us. Because the claims which a loved one has on us can be satisfied only by how we treat him or her, it is easier for us to undermine the ends of a friend or lover than it is to undermine those of a stranger. It is easier for us, in other words, to contribute actively to the friend's unhappiness by misbehaving or by simply neglecting the special claims which that person has on us.

In the drowning scenario, the primary end which the agent can undermine, through inaction, is the survival of the drowners. Since this end is held in common by all the drowners, it does not give the agent a criterion for deciding whom to help. But the agent holds a special relation to his wife--a relation which imposes special duties on him. In helping a stranger rather than his wife, the agent would violate the demands of loyalty and commitment which marriage imposes on him. He would, in other words, undermine ends which only he could satisfy. The death of someone cannot be prevented, but in allowing his wife to die, the agent would undermine not only her end of survival, but also her hope of loyalty and support from her husband. The latter is an end which the wife, but not the strangers, has in relation to the agent. Because the moral law requires first and foremost that we avoid violating our duties and avoid undermining other people's ends (G:437; D:384), it directs the agent to save his wife rather than a stranger, since, in a situation where undermining some ends is inevitable, it is best to promote those ends which are also bound up with other obligations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Note also that Kantian morality leaves room for an agent who is prepared, from a sense of duty, to help another person, to defer the helping action to someone who is prepared to help the agent because he has certain feelings for the patient. For a more detailed discussion of this sort of scenario, see Barbara Herman, "Integrity and Impartiality," pp.239-40.

#### IV. Motivation within personal commitments

Having shown how emotional bonds can give rise to special obligations, I now turn to the question of whether acting on such obligations can satisfy the specific motivational requirements that relationships impose on us. In particular, does it satisfy the need of our nearest and dearest to sometimes see us expressing our love for them without thinking of duty? My discussion of the preceding section might seem to have gotten me into deeper trouble with Williams in this regard. Williams, we recall, wants to avoid moralizing the personal by bringing duty into it. Unlike Barbara Herman and others who suggest that morality merely constrains us in our personal relations, I have argued that morality actually imposes special duties on us within those relations. If Williams thinks it one thought too many to help a loved one because it is morally permissible, then he certainly thinks it two thoughts too many to do so because it is not just permissible but actually required.

Acting from a sense of obligation, in Williams' eyes, is always less desirable from the patient's point of view than acting from love or some equivalent emotion. He asks,

is it certain that one who receives good treatment from another more appreciates it, thinks the better of the giver, if he knows it to be the result of the application of principle, rather than the product of an emotional response?

He may have needed, not the benefits of universal law, but some human gesture.<sup>14</sup>

When the agent and the patient are involved in a close relationship, the desire for an emotional response becomes especially urgent. Persons involved in such relationships place special demands on each other, a significant one being the expectation of emotional support. It is natural, especially when one is in a weak or insecure state, to expect one's friends to act from feelings of solidarity or support and not from a sense of obligation. The shipwrecked wife, Williams is right to point out, would clear prefer that her husband save her from love rather than from a sense of personal obligation.

The question then becomes: Do the special duties we have toward our loved ones leave us any scope for choosing motives other than a sense of obligation--for instance, feelings of love--to motivate us as we carry out these duties? Kant thinks they do. Being committed to a relationship involves making the other person's happiness an end (DV:469). Since the relationship itself is an end which the other person has, we are required to pursue the means necessary for preserving the relationship. This includes cultivating and acting on emotions which help keep the relationship alive. Love--the original, natural basis for the relationship--is an especially important emotion in this regard. Since the other person's happiness depends, to a great extent, on

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<sup>14</sup>Williams, "Morality and the Emotions," Problems of the Self (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973), p.227.

our love for him or her, we are obligated to cultivate those feelings of love and to strive to act on them (DV:470-472).

So rather than preventing us from acting on our feelings of love, Kantian morality actually encourages us to do so: cultivating and acting on feelings which help keep the relationship alive is one of the special duties which personal ties impose on us. In acting from love for his wife, the shipwrecked husband is fulfilling one of the special claims his wife has on him. Insofar as the feelings of love from which he acts carry the motive of duty along with them (as an awareness of the rightness and appropriateness of acting from emotion within this particular relationship), acting from these feelings--which are, after all, partly rationally based--has moral worth.

Williams would surely object here that on Kant's view of moral motivation, love can never serve as a direct motive because we are always required to ask whether our maxim is morally permissible, and this procedure distorts the motive of love itself. But this not only underestimates the moral perceiver (who knows when actions are morally right and when they are morally irrelevant though permissible), but also conflates maxims and motives. The maxim-directed categorical imperative test does not necessarily affect our motives. The same maxim of helping someone we are committed to can be carried out from a number of different motives--say, from love or from a sense of obligation. Maxims, in other words, are distinct and separable from motives. Testing our maxims against the categorical imperative test does

not necessarily distort the motives from which we choose to act. A pure and devoted love can serve as our motive for acting even when our maxim has been tested against the categorical imperative, should we need to do so. Of course, on Kant's view neither love nor any other motive can directly move us in the way Williams is envisioning, simply because Kant has a different view of moral motivation than Williams. On Williams' view, we act directly on rationally conditioned dispositions or character traits. On Kant's view, we act on a motive only after having incorporated it into our maxim (R:19), that is, after having endorsed a given policy. Because we choose our motive after making our judgment, moral motivation will always be conditioned by moral judgment. This, however, does not entail that our moral judgments distort our motives.

So far, I have been claiming that our special duties given us room for acting on love. But how is love, on Kant's view, related to the duty-motive which is also present in committed relationships? What, in other words, is the relation between the motive to act from a special duty toward a loved one and more natural motives such as love or sympathy? To answer this question, we need to get clearer on the nature of the duty-motive as it manifests itself in personal relations.

To be committed to another person is to have a sense of obligation toward that person: a preparedness to act for the sake of that person even when we do not feel like it. Even though the other person prefers that we act from our feelings of love, this



is not always possible. This has perhaps most clearly been illustrated by Paul Guyer, who shows that a slight variation on the shipwreck example would make duty a highly desirable motive for the wife to expect from her husband. Consider the husband faced with the choice of saving his aging wife or the young, beautiful woman he had been eyeing throughout the cruise. The wife might realize that, given the circumstances, it would be unreasonable of her to expect her husband to save her out of love. Surely she would prefer to have her husband save her from duty rather than letting her drown!<sup>15</sup>

Because the motive of duty arises in response to our principles and commitments, the duty-motive will always be available for us to act on even when we are not immediately inclined to honor our commitments. This does not mean that we always have to adopt it as our motive. The motive of love has a legitimate place within Kant's framework and need not always defer to the duty-motive. It is in situations of the sort Guyer considers that it becomes necessary to act from the duty-motive simply because natural feelings of love are not available. This does not mean that personally committed agents will need frequent use of the duty-motive. The committed agent will recognize the importance of acting from love within a relationship: love is valuable because it preserves the relationship itself and is the motive preferred by the patient. Recognizing this, he will have

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<sup>15</sup>See Guyer, Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality, Chapter 10, p.393.

cultivated his feelings of love toward his wife, and the feeling will therefore be available for him to act on on given occasions.

Insofar as the particular actions he undertakes from love stem from natrual love alone--that is, without any awareness of his commtment to the other person--his actions will not have any moral worth, since moral worth attaches only to actions done from duty (G:396-401). But he will still gain in moral perfection because he is more effectively carrying out his duty to promote the happiness of his wife. Moral perfection has two components--fulfilling all our duties and striving to do so from respect for the moral law (D:446)--and an agent increases his moral perfection whenever he fulfills a duty, even if he is not acting from a sense of duty. Natural love at least helps him effectively promote her happiness, and this increases his moral perfection if not his moral worth.

#### V. On the special value of personal relations

I conclude by considering why personal relations have a special value within Kant's moral scheme. Although Kant himself does not explain why personal relations have a special value, or what that value consists in, we can venture an educated guess. A clue is provided in a somewhat obscure passage from Kant's interleaved notes on the Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime:

A married man acquires and deserves more respect than a bachelor or a man who will have nothing to do with women.<sup>16</sup>

A woman<sup>17</sup> [is] more than a girl. A widow [is] also more than a girl. The reason for this is that the purpose is fulfilled at that moment, and also that the other people appear needy, that is, a girl wants to have a man (without any trouble), but a woman never wants to be a girl.

Furthermore, an encounter with a woman is regarded as [having] double [worth], and at the same time [an encounter] with a man, by the same token.<sup>18</sup>

Kant says that a married man or woman deserves more respect than a bachelor or young girl because "the purpose is fulfilled" in the case of the former but not in case of the latter. People involved in committed relationships have more worth in the sense of having more completely fulfilled a human purpose. But what sort of purpose? The purpose of which Kant is speaking can of

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<sup>16</sup>The German word for the last type of man is "Hagestoltze," which can also mean "misogynist."

<sup>17</sup>Throughout the passage, I translate "Frau" as "woman," but "wife" (in proper German, "Ehefrau") may be more fitting, since Kant draws a direct comparison between the married man and the woman, attributing more worth to them than to those who have not entered into committed relationships. By "woman," therefore, I take Kant to mean someone who has entered into a long-term relation with a man.

<sup>18</sup>The passage is my translation from Marie Rischmuller's edition of Kant's interleaved notes on his Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime. See Rischmuller, Bemerkungen in den "Beobachtungen ber das Gefuhl des Schonen und Erhabenen" (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1991), p.106. Rischmuller's reference is the following: page inserted after B 86, [113] front page, II 245, 15-30.

course be interpreted as a natural purpose--the purpose of perpetuating the species, which is at least potentially furthered by entering into relations with the other sex. However, I do not think Kant has a natural purpose in mind. If he did, the girl who enters into a relation with a man without wanting any of the trouble which at some time or other inevitably arises in long-term relationships would also hold a special value, but Kant clearly implies that she has less worth than a woman.

Instead, I suggest, Kant has a moral or rational purpose in mind. The reason why people who have entered into committed relationships deserve more respect than those who live a life without commitments is that they have more fully developed their rational and emotional natures than the uncommitted. The process of learning to trust another person by having the courage to reveal our innermost thoughts and feelings to him or her, for example, helps us overcome the barriers which we sometimes unnecessarily erect against other people. Friendship is "an aid in overcoming the constraint and the distrust man feels in his intercourse with others, by revealing himself to them without reserve" (LE:206). This trustful attitude has a moral value because it helps us form an ever-widening circle of friends and so, to become a "friend of man" who is engaged with the world (see DV:472-4). Such a person is more likely to carry out her duties not only toward friends but toward others in general.

In taking the ends of another as their own, people who are involved in committed relationships show a maturity and

responsibility lacking in those who live only for themselves. In cultivating the emotions required to keep the relationship alive, they strive for greater moral keenness and deeper emotional resonance than those who do not at any point in their lives risk emotional attachment. And those who strive to be more keenly seeing and more deeply feeling--in short, those who strive to perfect themselves in morally relevant ways--have greater moral worth and so deserve more respect than those who do not."<sup>9</sup> Entering into personal relations, then, is valuable because it makes us strive to be morally better beings.

## VI. The Moral Structure of Friendship

### i. Why the moral is not impersonal

On a careless reading of a crucial passage in Kant's Lectures on Ethics, Kant appears to equate the moral standpoint

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"Kant's claim that those who engage in committed personal relations have more worth than those who do not is of course difficult to reconcile with his claim that humanity is an end in itself, and so, that everyone has equal and absolute value (G:428-9). The two claims are compatible, however, if we distinguish, as Kant does, between a person's humanity and a person's moral stature (LE:196-7, 214-15, 227). Everyone has, in virtue of his ability to set and to realize ends, an absolute value which prohibits others from treating him as a mere means. But he also has, in virtue of the same capacity, various duties the fulfillment of which increases his moral worth and/or his moral perfection (the latter of which is also increased by the execution of his duties, not necessarily from the motive of duty) and so makes him worthy of happiness (see CPrR:61-2, 110-11). While persons cannot vary in the former type of value, they can in the latter; and it is the latter sort of value which accrues through engaging in friendships.

with the impersonal. He defines friendship as a relation involving special ties, and contrasts it with the aim of the civilized person--a "universal friendship" free of the restrictions of special ties:

If men complain of the lack of friendship, it is because they themselves have no friendly disposition and no friendly heart. They accuse others of being unfriendly, but it is they themselves who, by demands and importunities, turn their friends from them. We shun those who, under the cloak of friendship, make a convenience of us. But to make a general complaint about the lack of friends is like making a general complaint about the lack of money. The more civilized man becomes, the broader his outlook and the less room there is for special friendships; civilized man seeks universal pleasures and a universal friendship, unrestricted by special ties... (LE:207)

The passage might seem to suggest that the universal friendship is the properly moral relation, and that the special friendship is a mere matter of personal taste--not a genuinely moral relation at all. To dismiss the friendship of special ties as morally irrelevant, however, is to disregard the remarks which precede the contrast between personal and universal friendships. In these remarks, Kant suggests that special friendships serve as means toward broadening one's outlook with an eye to eventually becoming a "friend of man": special friendships are like money in that they serve as means toward obtaining something valuable.

But if they serve as means toward realizing a moral relation, then personal friendships must themselves contain at least some of the elements of morality, if only in rudimentary form.

In fact, there is no reason to claim, on the basis of the passage, that personal friendships are not themselves moral relations. In the passage, Kant groups neither the "universal" nor the "special" friendship explicitly with the moral. And elsewhere, he clearly indicates that there is a common core of morality running through both relations--a core which is broadened as civilization progresses, but which does not alter its basic structure (LE:201-3, 209). If so, the difference between the two is simply that the universal friendship is directed at a greater number of individuals, not that it alone contains a moral element.

In the Doctrine of Virtue, Kant defines the moral element which both types of friendship instantiate as a relation of "equal mutual love and respect" (DV:469). This balanced relation is the essence of friendship. It is a relation of intimacy tempered by respectful distance. Love draws people closer; respect keeps them at a dignified distance from each other (DV:449, 470). Love is attractive in the sense that it breaks down the boundaries between individuals. When I love someone, I desire his happiness: I desire for him what he desires. This is neither a passionate, possessive sort of love nor the mere act of wishing someone well, but rather an active sort of love which consists of striving to realize the ends of the loved one: Kant

thus defines love as taking the ends of another as one's own (DV:449, 452). Love breaks down boundaries between individuals in the sense that it effaces the distinction between my desires and yours: when I love you, your desires become mine. Respect, by contrast, preserves the boundaries between individuals. Kant defines respect as the principle of limiting one's self-esteem by the dignity of humanity in another (DV:449-50). Respect involves the recognition that the other person has as much worth as I do; that even when I do her a favor and she becomes indebted toward me, her freedom and independence do not diminish. Respect thus requires that I make no claims on the loved one: that I avoid seeing her as dependent on me; that I avoid expecting favors in return for mine. Since she remains free no matter how many favors I do for her, the matter of how she should relate to me must be left up to her own free choice (see LE:204).

Equal amounts of love and respect are important for a friendship to survive. If I love someone too much, I not only compromise my own integrity in the sense that the other may lose her respect for me (DV:450); I also put the other in a debt of gratitude toward me, which forces her to consider herself a step lower than me (DV:450). Too much respect, by contrast, puts the other in the cold, forfeiting the intimacy of the relation of friendship altogether (DV:470). An equal relation of mutual love and respect, in which neither party is compromised and both receive the comforts of love, is therefore necessary for the friendship to survive. Kant stresses that we can never tell



whether such an equal relation obtains; that in reality, the exchange of favors and the compromise of integrity that these favors entail keeps the relation of love and respect in continual flux (DV:450). It is in this sense that the emotional structure of friendship is an ideal which we strive to realize even though we can never know whether we have actually succeeded (LE:202-3). (Because it is inscrutable, friendship sets an ideal similar to morally worthy motivation; see Part II of this chapter.)

Note, however, that Kant thinks that one type of friendship, namely, the "moral" friendship (DV:471-3)--not to be confused with the "ideal" friendship of equal mutual love and respect discussed in the previous paragraph--has actually been realized in the world. In section I.ii, I consider his reasons for saying this, and also for distinguishing between "ideal" and "moral" friendship even though the former is also a moral relation. First, however, I want to explain why "ideal" friendship is a moral relation.

It is fairly easy to see why ideal friendship is a moral relation. It is defined as a relation of equal mutual love and respect. Now, respect is the central moral emotion, for Kant. When I respect someone's humanity, I respect, most broadly, her capacity to set and to realize ends and, more narrowly, her ability to grasp the concept of duty and to act on it.<sup>20</sup> It is

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<sup>20</sup>Kant's various claims about humanity and why it exists as an end in itself have been the source of much speculation. At G:428-9 and 437-9, Kant suggests that human beings are ends in themselves because they are able to form universalizable maxims in response to the concept of duty. At DV:387 and 392, however, he thinks of

these capacities which make her an end in herself and require me to think of her as a free individual rather than a means to my ends. But duty imposes other requirements on us than merely respecting each other. Given that each of us desires our own happiness, it is inconsistent with duty not to promote or desire the happiness of others as well (G:399, 423; DV:387-8, 393-4; 451). Friendship, as a relation in which we both respect another person and love her in the sense of promoting her ends, instantiates the two primary moral attitudes.

More importantly, friendship instantiates love and respect in their ideal relation, since neither is allowed to take precedence over the other. This balance is desirable in all moral relations, but is not so easy to attain. For instance, in doing someone--whether friend or not--a favor, one can show love but not a sufficient degree of respect toward the recipient by acting as if the favor is a great effort, or showing pride in one's benevolence, rather than acting as if it is simply right

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humanity more generally as the capacity to set and to pursue ends, whether moral or not. The two definitions are not strictly incompatible--in order to act virtuously, one must, after all, be able to set and pursue ends. Many commentators nevertheless see it as necessary to come down on one side of the issue. Commentators who see humanity as the general capacity to set and pursue ends are the majority, and include Thomas Hill, Jr. in "Humanity as an End in Itself," in Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory, pp.38-57 (see especially pp.38-41 for a helpful discussion of whether humanity refers to rational nature or more specifically to human nature) and Onora O'Neill in "Between Consenting Adults," in Constructions of Reason, pp.105-25, (especially pp.114-15). For a critical account which interprets humanity as the capacity for distinctively moral action, see Pepita Haezrahi, "The Concept of Man as an End-in-Himself," in Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert Paul Wolff, pp.291-313.

and nothing meritorious. Beneficent actions always put the recipient in a debt of gratitude toward the benefactor (DV:450), which wounds the recipient's pride (DV:456). This can easily tilt the balance of respect in favor of the benefactor unless the recipient feels as if the action was his simple due (DV:473). Now, if one makes the recipient feel indebted and humble, one counteracts the original intent of the action, which was to promote his happiness (DV:453); and so, one's action is inconsistent with the intended end and hence impermissible.<sup>21</sup> We have, then, a duty to promote the ends of strangers who are in need (DV:453), and this can be carried out only by showing equal love and respect. By embodying just that balance of equal love and respect, friendship constitutes the ideal for all moral relations.

We see, then, that contrary to Herman and Williams's assumption that Kantian morality is impersonal, and that the moral and the personal must therefore define distinct spheres of human relations, Kant actually sees the personal as setting a standard for more broadly directed, "impersonal" relations. The personal relation of friendship is, for Kant, a paradigmatically moral relation: it instantiates the balance of love and respect which we should strive for in all moral relations. Through intimacy with another, we become better moral creatures. Kantian morality is thus by no means impersonal.

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<sup>21</sup>See Onora O'Neill, CR, pp.91-2 for Kantian rationality-requirements on means-end relations; especially the third one.

This still leaves a lingering worry about the motive for entering into friendships. If one engages in friendships out of a desire for moral improvement, and not out of a desire to know someone on her own account, does not this remove the personal essence of friendship? If this is the case, then Williams' objection still holds. For while we have found a place for the personal within the moral, we have done so only at the cost of reducing the personal to a mere means for moral improvement, disowning it of any value it might have in itself. And this, Williams would surely say, is just the problem with an "impersonally" conceived moral system. We need, therefore, to turn to this objection.

## ii. A Motivational Dilemma

So far, we have considered the basic structure of friendship without going into the motivation for entering into friendships. In the Lectures on Ethics, Kant considers two conflicting motives which exist in each of us: our concern for our own happiness, and our concern for our own moral worth. The former tells us to look out for our own happiness first; the latter, to look out for that of others first. The solution to this dilemma, Kant claims, is to engage in friendships, since in doing so, we fulfill our duty to promote another person's happiness while at the same time being guaranteed that our own happiness will be promoted by our friend. Friendship thus satisfies both motives (LE:201-3).

This solution, however, immediately raises the worry noted at the end of Section I.i. If my motive for engaging in friendships is partly moral and partly selfish, does this not threaten the authenticity of my friendships? If I make friends because it is my duty to do so, and also because I know it will satisfy my self-love, does this not prevent me from being a real friend--someone who appreciates the other person on her own account and not for her capacity to help me thrive in both moral and selfish terms?

I believe that Kant has an answer to this worry, though he does not explicitly address it. The answer is to distinguish between the types of needs that are fulfilled through friendship. The "friendship of need," in which friends are there to help one another, is not a truly moral one because it always involves an imbalance of love and respect owing to the indebtedness that is brought about through mutual aid (DV:472). This does not, however, mean that there exist no truly moral friendships in the world. There exists a "moral" type of friendship which instantiates the basic structure of equal mutual love and respect, but which is distinctive in that its love-aspect seeks to satisfy not all of the other person's desires, but only her need to confide in another person: "Moral friendship (as distinguished from friendship based on feeling)," Kant says, "is the complete confidence of two persons in revealing their secret judgments and feelings to each other, as far as such disclosures are consistent with mutual respect" (DV:471). When I fulfil my

need to confide in another, I do not become indebted to the other person, since confiding in her was something I did myself. The other person was simply a good listener; she did not perform a special favor for which I am now indebted. I fulfilled my own need; she was simply there as a means to fulfilling it. Unlike the friendship of need, the "moral" friendship incurs no debts."<sup>22</sup>

The question remains, however, regarding our motive for engaging in moral friendships. Is not my need to confide in another person a selfish need, and if so, does not that reduce my friend to a mere "ear," a mere means to my ends? I think Kant would grant that this self-interested element exists. He takes a skeptical attitude towards the idea that our motive for engaging in friendships is utterly disinterested. We do not stand back and admire our friends in the way we admire objects of art. Our friends fulfill real needs. To grant that we do seek to fulfill a personal need when we engage in friendships, however, is not to claim that the motive for friendship is selfish. The need which we fulfill at least in "moral" friendships is distinctively social: it is a need to "communicate our whole self" (LE:206). In its distinctively social capacity, the need for self-

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<sup>22</sup>In his otherwise helpful article on Kant's notion of friendship, H.J. Paton neglects this difference between the friendship of need and the moral friendship, and so remains unable to explain why Kant denies that a truly moral friendship can involve excessive concern with the ends of others (DV:472). See Paton, "Kant on Friendship," Dawes Hicks Lecture on Philosophy, Proceeds of the British Academy, Vol.XLII (1956), pp.45-66. The passage in question is on p.55.

revelation resembles the Hutchesonian and Humean basis for morality, namely, sympathy backed a desire for others' approval, which is similarly social in essence.<sup>23</sup> Friendship can thus fulfill a need which is both personal and social in character.

The social motive for moral friendship also explains how Kant can claim that it is our duty to engage in friendships while at the same time avoiding the repellent notion that we engage in friendships out of a sense of duty. When we confide in another person, we demonstrate our trust in her. This trust has a distinctively moral role: it helps us cultivate a sense of trust toward the world in general. As Kant puts it, friendship is "an aid in overcoming the constraint and the distrust man feels in his intercourse with others, by revealing himself to them without reserve" (LE:206). The moral function of friendship is thus indirectly played out: it is realized not in the direct promotion of our friend's ends, but in our overcoming the barriers which we sometimes unnecessarily erect against the world at large. This trustful attitude has a moral value because it helps us form an ever-widening circle of friends, and so helps us along the path of becoming a "friend of man" (see DV:472-4). This final state is the goal of civilization (LE:206-7), and forming particular friendships is the best way to advance that goal. We are thus back at the passage with which we began Section I, the passage

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<sup>23</sup>The difference between Kant and the two British philosophers is, of course, that while Hutcheson and Hume base all moral relations on feelings, Kant bases moral relations on the moral law and allows feelings to motivate actions only on the condition that their maxims are either permissible or obligatory (see Chapter 1).

which contrasts special friendships with a universal friendship. The continuity between the two should by now be clear: they both contain a core of mutual confidence, which can be widened to include an increasing number of persons.

In defining the moral core of friendship as a relation of mutual trust, I am diverging from Kant's initial definition of the love involved in friendship as an acceptance of the other person's ends as one's own. Granted, the latter form of love is expressed in an ideal friendship. But as soon as we try to express it in the real world, we make the friend indebted to us, and this in effect ruins the friendship. Kant saw this: "A friend who bears my losses becomes my benefactor and puts me in his debt. I feel shy in his presence and cannot look him boldly in the face. The true relationship is cancelled and friendship ceases" (LE:204-5, my emphasis). Even when it is tempered by respect, the friend's display of love still puts the other in debt and so threatens to cancel the equality required for the friendship to survive. I believe it is for this reason that Kant redefines the conception of love manifested in real-life "moral" friendships as a love of mutual confidence rather than one of beneficence. It is possible to realize mutual confidence without engendering debts; hence the friendship of mutual confidence can survive. The love expressed in the purest friendships, then, removes barriers between individuals not in the sense of their accepting each other's ends, but in the sense of their revealing their innermost thoughts to each other. True friends do not



desire the same things; rather, they understand each another because they gaze into each other's souls.

It is important to notice however, that the friendship of mutual confidence, while more robust than the friendship of mutual love, also contains a fragile element. Kant puts it as follows: "we have certain natural frailties which ought to be concealed for the sake of decency, lest humanity be outraged. Even to our best friend we must not reveal ourselves, in our natural state as we know it ourselves. To do so would be loathsome" (LE:206). Not everything should be shared among best friends. Each of us has wishes and tendencies which can only be interpreted as vile or stupid, and to force them upon a friend endangers the friendship, either by producing shock or disgust in the friend, or, more likely, by making the friend despise one for insisting on imparting unsavory trivialities. In order to deflect such damage, one must, out of pride in oneself and out of respect for one's friend, refrain from imparting details which could provoke these reactions. The friend, in turn, has a duty to try as far as possible to refrain from judging while listening to what one needs to say. All this is done for the sake of preserving the friendship; and preserving one's friendships is a duty because friendship is a paradigm toward which one should strive in all moral relations: taking an interest in the ends of others, respecting them, and confiding in them.

Even though both the moral and the ideal types of friendship are fragile, a failure in friendship imparts valuable lessons.

These are lessons in moral judgment; and it is for this reason, I believe, that Kant makes friendship a duty even though part of its motivation is selfish and even though friendships can fail. For even when a friendship fails, one walks away as a better moral perceiver. Having failed in the friendship of mutual love and respect, one learns, as the violating beneficiary, not to appear patronizing--which helps one better to carry out one's duties of love towards others in general--or, as the patient, not to resent, not to interpret acts of good will as insults, and so, to cultivate a less suspicious, more generous frame of mind, which is essential to one's sense of dignity. A failure in the friendship of mutual confidence similarly hones one's practical judgment: either one learns that one needs more discretion in selecting what to reveal about oneself--one needs, so to speak, to "tighten one's filter" out of respect for one's own dignity as well as the listener's--or one learns that the friend was perhaps not such a close friend after all (for if she were, she might not have reacted so violently to the confidence), in which case one learns to pick one's friends more carefully. The latter increases one's moral self-knowledge by helping one see, through conflict and difference with another, what one's real character is.

These considerations help us answer the Williamsesque objection that Kantian friendship, because of its moral benefits, is an impersonal relation in which we engage as good soldiers in the army of duty rather than as creatures with specific tastes,

loyalties and attachments. The key is to deemphasize the motive for engaging in friendships and to focus instead on its effects. Friendship, or even failure in friendship, has morally beneficial effects which need not be part of the motive from which we engage friendships. We can engage in friendships from various motives: a need to confide in another, a desire to augment our happiness, a desire to feel needed, or simply an interest in a specific individual. But as the friendship develops, situations arise which give us occasion to reflect on the broader moral implications of the friendship. What prompts us to reflect is, of course, our concern for the friend--but the friend's expectations are at the same time an instance of the way people in general expect or desire to be treated, and this becomes clear once we compare the friendship with our other relations. Indeed, it is not uncommon that we treat our friends worse than we treat mere acquaintances, taking friends for granted and burdening them with worries, often unfounded, with we would not burden others; and such comparisons make us better friends as well as more sensitive moral creatures. Reflection on our actions toward our friends thus gives rise to reflection on the general claims of humanity, which leads in turn to an increased sensitivity and adeptness in dealing with people in general. These effects come naturally, in the same way feelings of love come naturally when we perform beneficent acts towards those whom we do not love; for the improvisation required in friendship is analogous to the improvisation required in all moral relations.

We see, then, that even though the motive for engaging in friendships need not be that of duty, the care taken to preserve the friendship is of a distinctively moral nature. This does not make the friendship "impersonal"; it only confirms the fact that people are not wholly unlike in their desires. Since to be loyal toward our friends is to treat them in the way anyone would expect to be treated in a similar situation, the maxim of loyalty towards our friends can be universalized without losing its personal touch. Far from being "impersonal," Kantian friendship instantiates the way every human being wants to be treated, and so increases our readiness to treat others as we would our friends. That this is perfectly compatible with showing special care towards should by now be clear.

## Section VII: Williams' Criticisms of Kant on the Emotions

### i. The emotions are capricious

Williams first considers Kant's observation that the emotions are too capricious to provide, on their own, a stable basis for moral response. Paraphrasing Kant, he writes:

I may feel benevolent towards this man, not towards that, for all sorts of causes or reasons, some lying in my own changing moods. To act in accordance with these promptings

is to act irrationally and (possibly) unjustly; but moral action is consistent action, done on principle (ME, 226).<sup>24</sup>

Williams levels two criticisms against Kant's claim that the emotions are capricious. First, he takes the claim to suggest that "there is no way of adjusting one's emotional response in the light of other considerations, of applying some sense of proportion, without abandoning emotional motivation altogether" (ME, 226). This, he continues, is a crude view of the emotions, since we obviously can and do distance ourselves from our emotions and seek to comprehend them in all sorts of situations. I have already traced, in Chapter 1, the development of Kant's view that the emotions are too capricious to serve as a stable foundation for moral principles. In this chapter, we saw that even though the emotions cannot found moral principles, they can be tempered by principles--cultivated--and in this guise serve various indispensable functions in the moral life. To answer Williams' first criticism, then, we need only note that Kant, contrary to Williams' assumption, does believe that we are able to apply a "sense of proportion" to our emotions, as his claim that we can cultivate and so modify our emotional response clearly implies. Williams' first criticism therefore does not apply to Kant.

In his second criticism of Kant's claim that the emotions are too capricious to serve as a basis for consistent moral

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<sup>24</sup>Here and hereafter, I use "ME" to refer to Williams' "Morality and the Emotions," in Problems of the Self (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973), pp.207-29.

action, Williams questions the value of consistency as a moral guideline, associating Kant's regard for consistency with "the Principle of Equal Unfairness," a principle which says that if you cannot do good to everybody in a certain situation, you should not do it to anybody. He complains:

There are indeed human activities and relations in which impartiality and consistency are very much the point. But to raise on these notions a model of all moral relations is...to make each of us into a Supreme Legislator; a fantasy which represents, not the moral ideal, but the deification of man (ME, 226).<sup>25</sup>

This passage exemplifies two common misreadings of Kant. The first is that Kant's regard for consistency--for the universalizability of our maxims--entails that he held something like the Principle of Equal Unfairness. In fact, Kant makes it clear that we have a considerable latitude in deciding whom to help and when; this latitude is the mark of all imperfect duties, including our duties of love toward others (see DV:390). I have already shown that the impartial requirements of the categorical imperative are fully compatible with personal commitments.

The second misreading of Kant is found in Williams' contention that to raise a model of all moral relations on the notions of impartiality and consistency is "to make each of us into a Supreme Legislator; a fantasy which represents, not the

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<sup>25</sup>See Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," Moral Luck, p.18 for a similar objection.

moral ideal, but the deification of man" (ME, 226).<sup>26</sup> Setting consistency-constraints on our actions, I take it, represents the deification of man only if it places implausible demands on us, such as the demand to be completely impartial in selecting whom we ought to help and when. But contrary to Williams' claim, the moral law does not require strict impartiality in selecting the objects of our actions; it only requires a consistency between the maxim and its universalized counterpart, and between our ends (e.g., the happiness of others) and the means through which we propose to realize them. We have just seen that it is possible to universalize a maxim which selects specific recipients of our favors. A human regard for our nearest and dearest is thus compatible with the demand for consistency which the moral law sets on us. Our identity as "Supreme Legislators" who are able to form maxims which can at the same time serve as universal laws, does not, then, impose inhuman or unattainable requirements on us: it does not "deify" man.

It is fruitful to elaborate briefly on the reasons behind this, since they are anchored in our finitude--in our specifically human nature--to which Williams mistakenly takes Kant to pay insufficient heed. The moral law applies to us as beings who are not purely, but finitely, rational: beings who are

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<sup>26</sup>Williams' term "Supreme Legislators" is in any case a misnomer, since most human beings being are only legislators in the kingdom of ends, not sovereigns or "supreme legislators." The sovereign in the kingdom of ends, Kant says, is a legislator who is "subject to the will of no other" (G:433). This, I take it, refers either to God or to the benevolent monarch--in any case, not to every human being.

embodied, who have emotional needs, who engage in specific and often socially defined relations, who live in a world of scarcity, and who are unable to perform miracles. These conditions place specific rationality-requirements on us. In order to form universalizable maxims, we must not only seek to realize our ends through the means available to us, but must also heed the frailty of human agency by refraining from undermining the projects of others.<sup>27</sup> Since virtue requires first and foremost that we not violate the moral law (DV:384), our first concern in the case of other people's happiness is to ensure that we do not actively promote their unhappiness by undermining their projects. When one is involved in a close relationship, it is easy to undermine at least one project of the other person--namely, the relationship itself--by failing to show the cares and emotions which keep the relationship alive. To preserve the relationship, then, it is necessary to extrude emotions which threaten it and to cultivate emotions which tend to preserve it. The moral law can in this way be seen to prescribe that we cultivate and act on emotions which keep our close relationships alive.<sup>28</sup> Far from devaluing emotional ties, our identity as

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<sup>27</sup>For some illustrations of the frailty of human agency, including examples of how human agency can be undermined, and the specific rationality-requirements which this frailty imposes on us, see Onora O'Neill, Constructions of Reason, pp.101, 114-15, 118, 125, and 140-41; also Onora O'Neill (then Nell), Acting on Principle, Chapter 6.

<sup>28</sup>This has been convincingly shown by Paul Guyer in Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), Chapter 10.



legislators of universal law imposes on us the duty to preserve the relationships and commitments which we enter into as finite rational beings.

ii. The emotions are passively experienced

Williams next criticizes Kant for claiming that the emotions are passively experienced. The dire consequence he takes this claim to have for Kantian morality is that it excludes emotionally motivated actions from having moral worth, when in fact they do have a moral or at least "human" value. He attributes to Kant the claim that "moral worth can attach only to what we freely do, to those respects in which we are rationally active" (ME, 227). Since, according to Kant, the emotions are neither rationally nor actively willed, moral worth cannot, Williams infers, attach to emotionally motivated actions, for Kant.

Williams first makes what he considers to be a minor objection, namely, that "emotionally motivated action can itself be free" (ME, 227). He takes Kant's claim that the emotions are passively experienced to imply that acting from emotions is also a passive, unfree affair. This reveals a deep misunderstanding of Kant's view of human agency. The passivity of the emotions does not entail, within Kant's system, that emotionally motivated actions are not free. All human actions are free, for Kant, including those motivated by emotions. Freedom of the will

consists in the ability to form maxims--reasons for acting--which are based on incentives, including emotions and desires, but not determined by them. As Kant famously puts it,

...freedom of the will is of a wholly unique nature in that an incentive can determine the will to an action only so far as the individual has incorporated it into his maxim (has made it the general rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself); only thus can an incentive, whatever it may be, co-exist with the absolute spontaneity of the will (i.e., freedom) (R:19).

Human actions are not brute responses to incentives; they stem instead from the freely formed intention to act on a given incentive and in the way described by the maxim. In order to act from an emotion--say, love--one must first, then, form the maxim that one will act from love in situations of that sort. This intention-forming process is what makes us rational agents: without it, we would neither deliberate nor control ourselves; we would simply act on--or react to--our strongest desire. Since an emotionally motivated action stems not directly from the emotion itself, but from the freely formed maxim to act on the emotion at hand, the action is itself free. Contrary to Williams' assumption, emotionally motivated actions--like all human actions--are free, for Kant.

The main thrust of Williams' criticism, however, concerns not the freedom, but the moral value, of acting on emotions. Williams takes Kant to hold that moral worth can never attach to

emotionally motivated actions because emotions are passively experienced, and moral worth can attach only to those respects in which we are "rationally active." Before going into the specific criticisms which Williams levels against Kant on this issue, we should note that Kant did not deny that some emotionally motivated actions have moral worth. As we saw earlier in this chapter, moral worth can attach to emotionally motivated actions in the following ways: actions motivated either by emotions which have been cultivated out of a sense of duty or by emotions which are recognized to be appropriate motives for fulfilling what duty requires, do have moral worth, for Kant, since the motivating emotions are in these cases not uncontrolled, but tempered by principles.

Williams has two deep objections to the idea that moral worth attaches only to what we actively do, to those respects in which we act on freely adopted principles, and not to "passive" emotional responses. Since moral worth, for Kant, attaches to emotionally motivated actions only if they are at the same time governed by principles, these objections strike directly at Kant.

In his first objection, Williams questions the idea that freely adopted principles can reflect one's sincere moral convictions. He points out an important resemblance between moral and factual convictions: both are passively adopted in the sense that they are impressed on us. If an agent claims that he has simply decided to adopt a moral principle, we have reason to doubt the sincerity of his principle. For moral convictions are

impressed on us; and a great degree of moral sincerity depends on our acknowledgement of this passivity, on our awareness that our moral convictions are not simply adopted at will. As Williams somewhat obscurely puts it:

We see a man's genuine convictions as coming from somewhere deeper in him than that; and, by what is only an apparent paradox, what we see as coming from deeper in him, he--that is, the deciding 'he'--may see as coming from outside him.

So it is with the emotions (ME, 227).

Williams seems to be making the following argument. Since we experience the emotions as being impressed on us--as coming from "outside" us--and since this passivity is essential to moral sincerity, acting from emotions is a prime instance of moral sincerity. To claim, as Kant does, that moral worth can attach only to what we freely decide to do, is to neglect the extent to which passively experienced phenomena, e.g., emotions, determine moral sincerity.

Now, there is certainly something deep and important in the idea that moral sincerity is intimately connected with the sense of being "swept up" by a situation and by the feelings it engenders, and that acting on such feelings is one way of showing moral sincerity. However, our moral convictions often run against the tide of our feelings. It is altogether unclear how Williams would characterize such conflicted situations. Would they be examples of moral insincerity, for him? Since he seems in the above passage to equate feelings with moral convictions,

or at least to see moral convictions as being bound up with feelings, he appears unable even to characterize situations in which we know that we should not act on our emotions; in which we know that it would be morally wrong to do so (think of a situation in which the other person's end is morally unacceptable, e.g., the case of deciding whether to help a friend planning to rob a bank). Perhaps Williams would describe such cases as involving a conflict of feelings, e.g., a conflict between loyalty to a friend and the feeling that helping him would be wrong in this situation. But the awareness that an action is morally wrong need not be bound up with any particular feeling. It is therefore misleading to characterize moral conflict as conflict between feelings. But that seems to be the only description available to Williams.

In any case, there is more to moral sincerity than simply doing what one is moved to do in a given situation. Moral sincerity requires also a commitment to one's convictions, a readiness to act on one's principles even when one does not feel like it; and that is precisely why Kant distinguishes between feelings and principles. Now, Williams might in fact concede that feelings are not the same as principles, and that it is possible (though he does not describe how) for a conflict to arise between one's feelings and one's sincere moral convictions. He would still, however, make the following objection to Kant's construal of how we adopt our moral convictions. Kant holds that we freely adopt the maxims on which we act, but Williams thinks

our principles are "impressed" on us, from outside, as it were. What appears to others to come from deep within a man is experienced by him, the moral subject, as coming from outside him. This is the element of passivity that Williams feels is so important to moral sincerity, and which he takes Kant to overlook.

But Kant would agree that we experience our moral convictions as being, in a sense, impressed on us. The moral law, he says, is a "fact of reason," an inescapable principle which "forces itself upon us" (Cpr:31). It belongs to the very structure of reason. It is not something we can decide to adopt as morally right, for it sets the standard of rightness itself. As finite rational beings, we can surely choose to violate the law. But we can never ignore the fact that it sets the paradigm for how we should act. We experience the moral law as being impressed on us "from outside," to use Williams' terms, because pure reason--with which we certainly identify, but which can never completely characterize us, since we are capable of violating its laws--imposes the moral law on us with a necessity which precludes decisions about whether to accept the law as morally right or not (Cpr:20). Our awareness of the moral thus has the "passive" element which Williams takes to characterize our awareness of our sincerely held moral convictions.

The "passive" phenomenology of our experience of the moral law, however, does not prevent us from freely adopting our maxims. Maxims are subjective principles of reason, principles

which describe how we propose to act in specific situations (G:422n). Since our maxims can either violate or conform to the dictates of the moral law, they do not necessarily reflect our sincere moral convictions, which, because of the inescapability of pure reason, always conform to the moral law even if we should deceive ourselves to think otherwise (R:33, 37). Since Williams fails to distinguish between freely chosen (and in this sense contingent) maxims and the moral law, which imposes itself on us with inescapable necessity, his complaint that we do not simply decide to adopt our moral convictions is not only vague, but also misplaced. Kant can thus answer all of Williams' objections.

### Conclusion

I have shown that far from asking us to sacrifice personal commitments and enlist in an impersonal army of duty, Kant recognizes that when we engage in friendships, we cultivate a moral disposition by cultivating the moral feelings themselves (in particular, mutual love and respect). In this sense, personal commitments serve as a paradigm for all moral relations.

Within intimate relationships, moral concerns manifest themselves in a specific way. The concern for (or awareness of) the rightness of our actions characteristic of the motive of duty formulates itself, in personal relations, in an especially urgent command to tend to the appropriateness of our feelings within the relationship--urgent because the relationship is based on natural feelings of love and these need to be tended to secure the

survival of the relationship. There is usually a harmony between our natural desires and the requirements of reason as they manifest themselves within the relationship; nevertheless, every day is not a sunny day, and we often consciously prepare for the storms which eventually tear at the seams of the relationship. This is an act of will and indeed a moral act, given Kant's requirement that we actively engage in friendships in order to learn how to attend to and care about the thoughts, needs and feelings of other people in general and so to cultivate our love of man.



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